

# Expanding Japan-Europe Defense Cooperation: Implications for the U.S.-Japan Alliance

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Summary of a November 2021 Conference

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## About These Conference Proceedings

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Key U.S. allies in Europe are increasingly turning their attention to the Indo-Pacific and looking to engage regional partners in defense cooperation, a trend that has opened up new opportunities for Japan to expand and deepen its security ties with European nations, both bilaterally and in partnership with the United States. To assess the implications of growing defense ties, operational military activities and engagements, and potential future developments between prominent European security actors and Japan, the RAND Corporation organized a virtual conference on November 3, 2021. These proceedings contain papers submitted by panelists that reflect their conference presentations.

### RAND National Security Research Division

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## Abbreviations

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ACSA	Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreement
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AUKUS	Australia–United Kingdom–United States
CPTPP	Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership
DoD	U.S. Department of Defense
EU	European Union
G7	Group of Seven
MSDF	Maritime Self-Defense Force
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PRC	People’s Republic of China
RAA	Reciprocal Access Agreement
SDSR	Strategic Defence and Security Review
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea



# Chapter 1. Introduction

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## Introduction

The expansion in recent years of key European nations' security dialogues, agreements, technology exchanges, and overall defense cooperation with Japan has attracted growing attention.<sup>1</sup> This growing attention, in turn, elicits several important questions. What factors are motivating leading European nations (such as France, Germany, and the United Kingdom [UK]) to engage more actively in the Indo-Pacific region in partnership with Japan? Which particular areas are these actors focusing on in their defense ties? What explains the patterns of commonality and difference across the countries? How does Japan regard such cooperation? What view does the United States take of this trend? And what are the potential implications for the United States and the policy questions that closer Europe-Japan defense ties raise?

To explore these questions, the RAND Corporation convened a virtual conference that brought together European, Japanese, and U.S. defense experts in November 2021, and these conference proceedings capture the insights that they developed in their presentations and the subsequent papers that they submitted. The conference was keynoted by remarks from former U.S. Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter. Noting that the United States and China are engaged in a geostrategic standoff, something that the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) realized years before diplomatic and economic actors came to share this realization, Carter highlighted growing concerns in Paris, Berlin, London, Tokyo, and Washington about an increasingly capable and aggressive Chinese threat to regional stability in the Indo-Pacific, as well as questions of capacity, commitment, and interests on the part of European states looking to raise their profile in the region. He noted that the United States is working to create a playbook for this geostrategic competition. In addition to crafting the defensive and offensive measures to limit the advance of China at the expense of the interests of the United States and its partners, he highlighted the importance of focusing on the relations the United States has with other countries with respect to China. In particular, he explained the advantages for the United States of bringing traditional allies and partners together, both in the Indo-Pacific region and in Europe, with Japan being a particularly important strategic partner. This importance made the focus of the

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<sup>1</sup> Jeffrey W. Hornung, *Allies Growing Closer: Japan–Europe Security Ties in the Age of Strategic Competition*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-A186-1, 2020.

conference extremely relevant to the types of strategic conversations taking place between the United States and its allies.

The panel discussion touched on such issues as intelligence-sharing, coordinating cyber defenses, collective efforts aimed at countering disinformation, and deepening coordination on defense technology cooperation to complement occasional training and exercises in the maritime and air domains, as well as how European partners would best balance their interest in being more proactive in the Indo-Pacific with the need to ensure that adequate resources and attention are devoted to European security affairs, particularly in light of the clear threat posed by a revanchist Russia.

These conference proceedings bring together papers submitted by the five panel members in the months following the conference and address the above issues.

An important note to readers: Drafts were written prior to Russia's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine, with some minor revisions occurring after the invasion began. Therefore, some of the content by the authors may not reflect the current realities of the security situation in Europe and the strategic priorities of the actors examined. The implications of this, evident in the months and years ahead, will likely be found in such areas as Europe's ability to devote resources to the Indo-Pacific, Europe's willingness to exercise with non-North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) members, and Japan's devotion of resources and attention to partner with European countries.

Also note that although the Japanese government does not refer to Japan's Self-Defense Forces as a *military*, we use the term in these proceedings to describe the Self-Defense Forces' activities with their European counterparts.

## Overview of the Proceedings

In Chapter 2, Mathieu Duchâtel of Institut Montaigne notes that security cooperation with Japan is a core pillar of France's Indo-Pacific strategy. French defense presence and activity in the region reflects the country's South Pacific holdings and citizens, as well as its capabilities and other interests. Although Paris's focus in the Indo-Pacific in the past was more on trying to build a cooperative relationship with China, such ambitions have been cast aside in favor of a more realistic, national security-driven emphasis on ties with like-minded democracies. With Japan specifically, France has focused on training and exercises (especially in the realm of amphibious operations and surface warfare), defense-related technology transfer, and defense industrial cooperation (though defense industrial cooperation has been underdeveloped to date and needs a signature project if it is to really begin driving relations. Aside from more-concrete activities and exchanges, Duchâtel notes the centrality of less tangible but no less important connections through the shared values and trust that have developed between France and Japan. Noting that Australia's ties with France have been damaged by the Australia-UK-United States (AUKUS) agreement, which led to the termination of France's planned sale of submarines to

Canberra, Duchâtel argues that Franco-Japanese defense cooperation has an important role to play in tying together Europe and the Indo-Pacific. For this reason, he argues, the United States should support and seek synergies with France's defense ties with Japan, attempting to use these ties to further integrate France into the regional security order so as to gain value from its activities while countering any voices in France that might argue that Paris is best served by pursuing a role as a separate, alternative security provider.

In Chapter 3, Alexandra Sakaki of Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik contrasts Germany's defense cooperative ties with Japan with those of France and the UK, pointing out that Berlin's engagement with Tokyo on defense affairs has evolved fairly quickly in recent years, albeit from a low base by comparison with Tokyo's engagement with Paris or London. She notes that the "formerly low level of ambition to strengthen bilateral ties stemmed from a divergence in strategic priorities and interests, as well as an accompanying lack of awareness for each other's positions" but that, increasingly, both Berlin and Tokyo appear to perceive value in greater contacts and cooperation in the security space. This can be attributed in part to a shared "growing apprehension on both sides about the erosion of the existing rules-based liberal international order" under the twin threats of an authoritarian China and Russia, as well as concerns in both countries about U.S. reliability after the presidency of Donald Trump. Berlin's response has been to lay out a set of comprehensive guidelines that "call for diversifying relations with countries in the region both geographically and in substance," with Japan being a particular focus of Germany's new approach.

Although bilateral defense ties remain largely centered on official dialogues, there has been growing interest in training and exercises, as well as a recent round of agreements to facilitate technology transfer and intelligence-sharing. Noting that the Scholz government that took over in late 2021 has many areas of its Indo-Pacific policy that have yet to be clarified, Sakaki argues that it is nonetheless likely to build on and deepen the trends noted above and argues that these trends should be seen as beneficial to and complementary with the U.S. focus on allies and partners. She points out that "European countries, such as Germany, may feel more comfortable engaging in nontraditional security issues in Asia" and suggests that intelligence-sharing, cooperation on cybersecurity, and efforts to counter disinformation could prove promising in the near term. Over the longer haul, Germany may need some years of increased investment in recapitalizing its hard-power capabilities before it can more regularly dispatch and sustain forces to engage with Japan on such things as regular military deployments, exercises, or training. Nonetheless, these could be possible in the future and would be appealing to many in Berlin, Tokyo, and Washington.

In Chapter 4, Veerle Nouwens of the Royal United Services Institute traces the slow evolution of the UK's orientation toward the region, away from a commercial focus on a "Golden Era" of relations with China as the centerpiece of the *Asia-Pacific* and toward a more national security-oriented engagement with the *Indo-Pacific*, a framing shaped in key ways by Japan and the United States. In March 2021, London announced its "Indo-Pacific tilt," an

approach it “outlined in its *Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy* and its *Defence Command Paper*.” Although the UK aspires to be the leading European power in the Indo-Pacific by 2030, the *Integrated Review* nonetheless recognizes, as Nouwens notes, that the UK’s approach to the region cannot be

simply about boots, bullets, and boats (or the traditional uses of military power) but increasingly about innovation, infrastructure, and integration with partners as emerging and advanced technologies and critical national infrastructure are viewed as central to national security and resilience.

The UK’s approach is also likely to lean heavily on cooperation with Japan, with which it has been moving “from strength to strength” over the past decade, with cooperation on defense training and exercises, dialogues, intelligence-sharing, and technology exchanges. These have been further bolstered by trilateral engagement with the United States, which benefits from two of its closest allies cooperating across a broad range of defense areas.

In Chapter 5, Michito Tsuruoka of Keio University shifts the perspective to examine how growing European interest in the security affairs of the Indo-Pacific looks from Tokyo’s perspective, noting that Japan welcomes the rapid growth of European interest in the region and the opportunity to partner with such countries as France, Germany and the UK. Although these relationships will not replace and cannot substitute for Japan’s alliance relationship with the United States, they represent an additional layer of cooperation that can help address the rapid worsening of the regional security picture that Tokyo perceives. Tsuruoka notes five major types of opportunities for Japan to deepen its cooperative security ties with European partners: (1) on political and diplomatic issues, (2) in the practical military operations realm (mainly in the naval realm but increasingly in the air domain), (3) on defense industrial and economic security questions, (4) as a cyber defense partner, and (5) as partners cooperating with the United States in the region. Some Japanese observers believe that Europe’s limited capacity may mean that it makes more sense for European nations to focus on their own region so as to free some U.S. military capacity to be reapportioned to the Indo-Pacific, but Tsuruoka notes that many of the types of cooperation that are of greatest interest do not require European partners to send physical forces so much as to share information, set joint standards, and coordinate policy. Giving Japan some “homework,” Tsuruoka argues that Tokyo needs to set a strategy for how to engage with Europe in the Indo-Pacific, quickly sign a series of Reciprocal Access Agreements (RAAs) that would enable European partners to operate in and with Japan, and shift away from a mindset in which defense cooperation with the United States is for serious security issues while contacts with European partners are just to facilitate friendly ties. To maximize the prospect of deeper and more meaningful European security ties with the region, and to guard against the possibility that the Russian invasion of Ukraine does not lead to a loss of momentum, he argues for a “joint Japan-U.S. strategy on how to ensure synergies between the Japan-U.S. alliance and Japan’s defense and security engagements with European nations.”

Chapter 6 pivots to a U.S. view of the growing defense ties between Europe and Japan, as Jeffrey W. Hornung of RAND notes that Washington perceives a set of four highly desirable opportunities to encourage and help structure Europe-Japan defense cooperation on key areas: cyberspace, military exercises and training, security agreements, and defense industrial development. These are key areas to focus on because they will help bolster Washington's efforts to push back on and respond to the rise of an aggressive, authoritarian China, which the United States cannot address effectively by itself. As the Biden administration has argued, this challenge is of such a magnitude that it will require coordinated responses by allies and partners. Given that not all European allies see China in the same light, it appears more promising to focus on areas in which cooperation can be inclusive even of European partners that are less willing to confront China directly. And as the Russian invasion of Ukraine has made clear, the question of how many resources and how much strategic attention European actors should devote to the Indo-Pacific is real, immediate, and likely to demand serious consideration for years to come, both in European capitals and in Washington, with implications for Tokyo.

The concluding chapter brings together insights from the individual chapters. The authors coalesce around an understanding that the motivation behind leading European nations to engage more actively in the Indo-Pacific region is caused by a growing recognition of the threat China poses to the liberal international order, European values and interests, and the security of the Indo-Pacific. This perception has helped to fuel a shift in interest in the region and status quo democracies, Japan foremost among them. The areas of defense cooperation between Japan and these European countries cover a wide range, including military training and exercises, defense exchanges, and defense engagement in the realms of cyber defenses, intelligence-sharing, and technology transfer. And although there are general similarities in the language and strategies that elevate the Indo-Pacific's priority and the need to maintain a "free and open" region, there are differences across the European nations' identities, interests, perceptions, and capabilities that help drive the different levels of defense engagement with Japan. Importantly, the authors agree that deepening Europe-Japan defense cooperation benefits the United States, whether through the strategic signals it sends China or the stronger strategic ties that its allies are forging around a common challenge. That said, the authors also raise the importance of the United States, Japan, and Europe coordinating their cooperation around the role of European partners in the Indo-Pacific and their ties with Japan to ensure that such engagements are additive to—or at least not subtractive from—European deterrence efforts aimed at deterring Russian aggression.

## Chapter 2. France-Japan Security Cooperation: Building on Solid Ground

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### Introduction

Security cooperation with Japan is an important component of French policy in the Indo-Pacific. With sovereign interests in both the Indian and the Pacific oceans, France was the earliest European advocate of an Indo-Pacific strategy. Given the size of its exclusive economic zone (9.1 million square km) in the two oceans, France has a long-term interest in a maritime order based strictly on the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).<sup>2</sup> This is particularly true because France faces two low-intensity maritime delimitation disputes with Madagascar and Vanuatu. In addition, nontraditional challenges, such as illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing and drug trafficking, are potential risks, especially if the overall maritime security environment in the Indo-Pacific deteriorates. France employs its national resources (in particular, its naval assets) to prevent French interests from being challenged. This is not simply an issue of maritime domain awareness and law enforcement at sea; France also aims to shape the security order in the Indo-Pacific with the view, as articulated by then-Minister of Defence Jean-Yves Le Drian in 2016, that “if the law of the sea is not respected today in the China seas, it will be threatened tomorrow in the Arctic, the Mediterranean or elsewhere.”<sup>3</sup>

France’s Indo-Pacific strategy forms the broader background and framework within which security cooperation with Japan needs to be analyzed. French Indo-Pacific strategy is centered on key bilateral partnerships with three regional actors: Australia, Japan, and India. From a longer historical perspective, this approach to the region has marked a shift away from France’s Sino-centric Asia policy, which defined Paris’s overall engagement in the wake of Charles de Gaulle’s 1964 recognition of the People’s Republic of China (PRC). The 2003–2004 attempt by then-President Jacques Chirac to get the European Union’s (EU’s) arms embargo on China lifted is now a distant memory. Today, the areas of divergence in Franco-Chinese relations far exceed the areas of convergence. The AUKUS defense agreement, however, has resulted in Gaullist voices

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<sup>2</sup> Mayotte and La Réunion islands, the Scattered Islands, French Southern and Antarctic Territories, New Caledonia, Wallis and Futuna, French Polynesia, and Clipperton Island generate 93 percent of France’s exclusive economic zone. French Polynesia alone generates more than 70 percent of France’s exclusive economic zone.

<sup>3</sup> Jean-Yves le Drian, French Minister of Defense, “The Challenges of Conflict Resolution,” speech, 15th Asia Security Summit, International Institute for Strategic Studies Shangri-La Dialogue, June 5, 2016.

reappearing in the public debate in France, and President Emmanuel Macron is rearticulating French Indo-Pacific strategy with a new emphasis on a European “third way,” by which he seems to mean compatibility but not alignment with the Indo-Pacific strategy of the United States and avoidance of direct confrontation with China. This strategy, however, should not represent an obstacle to incremental deepening of Franco-Japanese security cooperation, as France will remain by far the most active EU power in Indo-Pacific security affairs in the foreseeable future.

This chapter describes the strides made by France and Japan in their security cooperation since 2014 in the areas of joint exercises, technology transfers, and defense industrial cooperation. It argues that the lack of large-scale arms sales will not prevent the Franco-Japanese security partnership from achieving incremental progress, given the solid foundation of the relationship, which rests on a common understanding of the international security order and a close assessment of China’s strategic trajectory.

## Current State of Bilateral Security Cooperation

Franco-Japanese security cooperation is conducted within the framework of the “exceptional partnership” (“partenariat d’exception”), which was concluded in 2013 as an upgrade of the 1995–2013 “strategic partnership.” Although there is no formal hierarchy of types of partnerships in French diplomacy, the term *exceptional* is meant to convey the message that the relationship carries specific, and substantial, political weight, similar to the term *tokubetsu partnership* (特別なパートナーシップ) in Japanese, which conveys the idea of a special and unique relationship. The upgrade occurred in the context of President François Hollande’s state visit to Japan in 2013, which put an end to five years of relatively cold Franco-Japanese relations under the presidency of Nicolas Sarkozy, who had only spent a few hours in Tokyo during his mandate, as a side trip to a G20 summit. The French intention was to reinstate the sense of exceptionalism that was the legacy of President Chirac’s 1996 state visit to Japan.

The key document structuring the bilateral partnership is the 2019–2023 roadmap agreed upon during the June 2019 visit of President Macron to Japan.<sup>4</sup> That document states that the relationship is sustained by five pillars, two of which concern security cooperation. Pillar One aims to reinforce cooperation in the Indo-Pacific and includes a focus on maritime security and maritime domain awareness in regard to island countries of the Pacific Ocean and the Western Indian Ocean and in “essential maritime channels.” Pillar Two is focused on bilateral cooperation in the areas of security and defense and states the goal of reaching “effective interoperability” between the French Armed Forces and Japan’s Self-Defense Forces. It

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<sup>4</sup> Government of Japan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Roadmap for Franco-Japanese Cooperation to Open New Horizons in the Framework of the Exceptional Partnership (2019–2023) [Feuille de Route sur la Coopération Franco-Japonaise pour Ouvrir de Nouveaux Horizons entre la France et le Japon dans le Cadre du Partenariat d’Exception (2019–2023)],” June 2019.

specifically mentions joint initiatives toward third countries in Asia and Africa and emphasizes the importance of Djibouti, where both countries have a permanent military presence, as a hub for carrying out such cooperation. In practice, the partnership receives political guidance in a 2+2 format by which the ministers of foreign affairs and defense have met annually since 2014. In terms of deepening defense ties, three main areas of cooperation stand out as noteworthy.

First, with the two navies in the lead, the French and Japanese armed forces are building interoperability through regular joint exercises. The 2019 roadmap created a political foundation for upgrading cooperation. In 2019, France initiated the La Pérouse naval exercise with Australia, Japan, and the United States. The first exercise took place in 2019 in the Gulf of Bengal with the French aircraft carrier *Charles de Gaulle* and the Japanese helicopter carrier *Izumo*.<sup>5</sup> The second took place in March 2021 with India joining a Quad-plus-France format,<sup>6</sup> including the deployment of the *Mistral*-class LHD (landing helicopter dock) *Tonnerre*, La Fayette-class frigate *Surcouf* and Japanese destroyer *Akebono*.<sup>7</sup>

In terms of France-Japan military cooperation, 2021 was a particularly busy year. In May, the *Tonnerre* and *Surcouf* were in the East China Sea for a replenishment at sea exercise with Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) replenishment ship *Mashū*.<sup>8</sup> The same month, a four-country naval exercise with the United States and Australia involved anti-surface and anti-submarine warfare, air defense at sea, amphibious landings, and air assault.<sup>9</sup> The exercise involved four destroyers, a landing ship tank (LST), patrol boats and an unnamed submarine from the MSDF, a *San Antonio*-class landing platform dock (LPD), *Poseidon* P-8A and *Osprey* aircraft from the United States, an Australian *Anzac*-class frigate, and the two previously mentioned French ships.

French land forces also trained for the first time on Japanese soil in 2021, with U.S. and Japanese forces partaking in an amphibious assault exercise focused on retaking an island and simulating urban warfare.<sup>10</sup> The preparation of the exercise showed the difficulties of operationalizing the vision of the 2019 roadmap in the absence of a Status of Forces Agreement or an RAA, such as the one Japan and Australia concluded in early 2022.<sup>11</sup> Japan's use of the

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<sup>5</sup> French Ministry of Armed Forces, "Update on Operations from May 10 to 16 [Point de Situation des Opérations du 10 au 16 Mai]," undated.

<sup>6</sup> The *Quad* refers to the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue between Australia, India, Japan, and the United States.

<sup>7</sup> Xavier Vavasseur, "Australia France India Japan and the United States Take Part in Exercise La Pérouse," *Naval News*, April 6, 2021a.

<sup>8</sup> Commander, Logistics Group Western Pacific Public Affairs Office, "French, Japanese, and U.S. Navies Build Logistics Network in Indo-Pacific," *Naval News*, May 24, 2021.

<sup>9</sup> Xavier Vavasseur, "Amphibious Exercise ARC 21 Underway with Australia, France, Japan, United States," *Naval News*, May 16, 2021b.

<sup>10</sup> "France for 1st Time Takes Part in Japan, U.S. Joint Military Drills," *Asahi Shimbun*, May 16, 2021.

<sup>11</sup> Government of Japan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Japan-Australia Reciprocal Access Agreement," January 6, 2022.

death penalty has been a stumbling block for concluding such agreements; as a result, each activity on Japanese soil requires a temporary technical arrangement.

The second area of security cooperation is controls over technology transfers, especially the export of dual-use goods. This has been a historical driver of Franco-Japanese security cooperation: as part of efforts to build a foundation for the arms industries of the two countries to engage in joint projects and as part of Japanese outreach to limit the transfers by third parties of licensed dual-use technology to military end-users in China. In 2015, France and Japan signed a bilateral agreement regarding transfers of defense equipment and technology.<sup>12</sup> The agreement created a framework to exchange information and technology within a scope limited to joint industrial projects; in practice, however, it was also instrumental in creating space for exchanging best practices regarding transfers to third countries. At a time when control regulations and bureaucracies in the West are challenged by innovation coming from civilian industries and by China's Military-Civil Fusion strategy, this is an important area of Franco-Japanese cooperation.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, Chinese access to French and Japanese dual-use technology through direct investment by civilian companies and challenges linked to science, research, and education cooperation that contribute to Chinese military modernization are issues that have gained prominence in recent years in the China policy of France and Japan.

Franco-Japanese cooperation in this area is distinct from French security cooperation with Australia and India, for which this dimension is lacking (a reality that also reflects the relative weakness of these two countries' defense technological and industrial bases). As France, and European countries more generally, continuously work to improve their toolbox of defensive measures to prevent intangible technology transfers through direct investment or research and education cooperation (with China in mind), the Franco-Japanese agreement gives Japan a distinct position as an interlocutor and a partner for France and Europe on such issues as export control and investment screening.

The third area, and the weakest to date, is defense industrial cooperation. This is a new area for Japan, a country in which the ban on arms exports was only conditionally relaxed by Prime Minister Abe Shinzō in 2014 and in which the import market is a quasi-monopoly of the U.S. arms industry.<sup>14</sup> As of early 2022, Thalès and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries are involved in a five-year joint project to develop sonar technology for anti-mine warfare drones, with the aim of

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<sup>12</sup> Government of France and Government of Japan, "Agreement between the Government of the French Republic and the Government of Japan regarding the transfer of defense equipment and technologies [Accord entre le Gouvernement de la République Française et le Gouvernement du Japon relatif au transfert d'équipements et de technologies de défense]," March 13, 2015.

<sup>13</sup> Mathieu Duchâtel, *Technology Transfers: The Case for an EU-Japan-US Cooperation Framework*, Paris: Institut Montaigne, March 2022.

<sup>14</sup> Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, "Trade Register for Japan's Arms Imports (2010–2020)," Arms Transfers Database, accessed on January 10, 2022.

building a new autonomous system to detect and classify underwater threats.<sup>15</sup> According to the former French Ambassador to Japan, there is some Japanese interest for the L-CAT/EDA-R landing catamaran produced by the French company Constructions industrielles de la Méditerranée (CNIM).<sup>16</sup> There is also long-standing Franco-Japanese research cooperation in humanoid robots (since 2004), with some applications for the arms industry.<sup>17</sup> Japan has not exported military technology to Europe, and France and Japan were competitors in the early phase of the Royal Australian Navy's submarine program. There was also disappointment in France that Airbus Helicopter and its partner Kawasaki Heavy Industry were defeated in 2015 by a Bell/Fuji consortium for a contract to supply the Self-Defense Forces with 150 military helicopters; at one point, Airbus even considered legal action against Japan's Ministry of Defense.<sup>18</sup> Overall, the arms industry is not a strong driver of the partnership. For cooperation in that area to take off, France and Japan would need a successful signature project. Even the underwater mine warfare system, were it to result in a jointly developed and fielded system, may not have the sufficient scale to change the overall slow dynamic in the developing partnership.

## Looking Ahead: The Importance of Trust

Concrete and quantifiable substance is not everything in a relationship. On the intangible side, Japan has played an important role in France—and, more generally, in Europe—to raise awareness of the security risks of rising Chinese military power, the nature of People's Liberation Army operations in East Asia, and the challenges of addressing China's Military-Civil Fusion strategy. The fact that General Nodomi Mitsuru, former director of Japan's Defense Intelligence Headquarters, was awarded the Légion d'Honneur (or Legion of Honor) in December 2021 for his work to deepen Franco-Japanese cooperation in the Indo-Pacific is a sign of the quality of bilateral exchanges. Japan benefits from a reputation in France for trustworthiness and predictability built up over many years. This is an important asset that has only served to increase the relative importance of Japan as a defense and security partner for

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<sup>15</sup> “Thalès and Mitsubishi Join Forces to Develop Sonar Technology for Underwater Minesweeping [Thalès et Mitsubishi Unissent Leurs Forces pour Développer une Technologie Sonar Permettant de Déminer les Mers],” VIPress.net, March 30, 2021.

<sup>16</sup> Laurent Pic, “Franco-Japanese Cooperation in Defense Equipment and Technology [La Coopération Franco-Japonaise dans le Domaine des Technologies et des Équipements de Défense],” in Océane Zubeldia and Marianne Péron-Doise, eds., *Japanese Defense Industry: Rebirth and Innovation [L'Industrie de Défense Japonaise: Renaissance et Innovation]*, Paris: Institut de Recherche Stratégique de l'École Militaire, January 2018.

<sup>17</sup> Eiichi Yoshida, “Working Together with Humanoids: 10 Years of French-Japanese Collaboration on Robotics,” in Océane Zubeldia and Marianne Péron-Doise, eds., *Japanese Defense Industry: Rebirth and Innovation [L'Industrie de Défense Japonaise: Renaissance et Innovation]*, Paris: Institut de Recherche Stratégique de l'École Militaire, January 2018.

<sup>18</sup> Leo Lewis, “Airbus Eyes Legal Action Against Japanese Defence Ministry,” *Financial Times*, August 24, 2015.

France when seen against the backdrop of AUKUS and the crisis in trust in Franco-Australian relations.

Indeed, France's security cooperation with Japan differs from the Franco-Australian security partnership that the Scott Morrison government chose to severely undermine by not engaging in serious consultations with France in the lead-up to the announcement of the establishment of AUKUS. For France, that step represented far more than merely the loss of an important naval contract. Instead, years of efforts to cultivate a long-term strategic partnership were overturned by the Australian decision. The electoral defeat of Prime Minister Morrison in Australia in May 2022 offers an opportunity to return the Franco-Australian relationship to a positive track of deepening cooperation. The 2022 Shangri-La dialogue in Singapore saw a thaw, with the two defense ministers calling for a reset. How the two sides overcome the damage inflicted on mutual trust by the Morrison government remains to be seen. The submarine contract was a powerful engine of Franco-Australian security cooperation because it mobilized dozens of individuals from the defense establishments and security leadership on both sides. This highlights the importance of investing in individuals to form a solid basis for long-term security cooperation. This is an important lesson for Franco-Japanese relations.

The Franco-Indian partnership is also driven by arms contracts, but there are other strong drivers as well: Cooperation in the civilian nuclear industry and a history of reliable French support to India, such as during the 1999 Kargil crisis, provide a solid foundation of mutual trust. In contrast to France-Japan relations, there is potential for future large arms deals in France-India relations because the Indian military will rely on foreign procurement for some systems for its air force and navy. This differs from the key strategic drivers in the France-Japan partnership, which center on defending UNCLOS, regulating technology transfers, and (potentially) future industrial partnerships and cooperation in third countries through Djibouti.

France-Japan security cooperation is in the interest of the United States. As with France-Australia relations, AUKUS has created a crisis of trust in Franco-American relations; although the problem has been addressed via high-level diplomacy, it has not been fully resolved. The French perception that the United States does not truly value French involvement in Indo-Pacific security affairs has increased the appeal of a "Third Way" narrative in some French foreign policy circles. The France's 2021 Indo-Pacific strategy states, "Beyond any logic of blocks [sic], we therefore intend to champion a third path in the Indo-Pacific, for responding to today's upheavals with all well-intentioned powers."<sup>19</sup>

Such an approach envisions France in the Indo-Pacific as offering an alternative to countries in the region so that they are not forced into a binary choice between the United States or China. Such a strategy could, however, raise questions in Washington regarding the reliability of Paris as an ally. From that perspective, France's Indo-Pacific strategy is not separable from France's promotion of European strategic autonomy or the misunderstanding and misperceptions the

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<sup>19</sup> French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, "France's Partnerships in the Indo-Pacific," April 2021, p. 2.

notion has generated in Washington. Strategic autonomy is often characterized as an alternative to NATO or an attempt to create a European army, with a focus on the endgame. In France, however, it is understood as a process of decreasing reliance on the United States in European security affairs and as part of President Macron’s vision of France as a “puissance d’équilibre” (tentatively translated as “balancing power,” allied but not aligned).

In the context of the Russian invasion of Ukraine at the beginning of 2022, President Macron provoked controversy by suggesting that members of the EU should “rethink European security architecture” as part of his efforts to create the conditions for a diplomatic solution prior to Russia’s invasion. However, at no point has the French government suggested a rethink of the alliance with the United States, and President Macron’s initiatives all aim at compatibility with NATO.

Instead of competing to offer an alternative to the United States, French involvement in Indo-Pacific military security could serve as a strong basis for transatlantic mutual trust. The United States, for its part, could support a gradual enhancement of trilateral France-Japan-U.S. joint exercises, potentially augmented by a growing French involvement in joint exercises conducted within the framework of the Quad. In addition, because the United States and Japan are global leaders in designing restrictions on technology transfers on national security grounds, Japanese initiatives with France and Europe in that regard are of important value to the United States. To regulate intangible technology transfers to military and law-enforcement end-users in China, Japan, the United States, and the EU need to align on defining best practices and lists of emerging technologies—and bilateral Franco-Japanese security cooperation could prove an important element of that larger puzzle.

Looking ahead, France and Japan should conclude an RAA to unlock the potential for practicing interoperability through joint exercises. In the Indo-Pacific, France and Japan need to deliver on the maritime security goals of the 2019–2023 roadmap by setting up joint projects that increase the maritime domain awareness of coastal states. Currently, there are no joint capacity-building projects of importance. Defense innovation cooperation should receive more policy attention as a priority area. Robotics for sea mine detection currently seems to be the most promising area to achieve common results, but it remains a modest project. Japan’s new approach to defense innovation as part of its economic security legislation will lead to a rethink of international cooperation, and France should seize the opportunity. Finally, France and Japan—and France through the EU—should step up cooperation as they rethink their approach to science and technology exchanges with China to prevent intangible technology transfers to military end-users. This last aspect could be addressed in a trilateral format with the United States.

## Chapter 3. Germany's Security Cooperation with Japan: Modest but Significant

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### Introduction

For decades, relations between Germany and Japan have been good and cooperative, if somewhat lacking in substance and depth across many policy fields, including security policy. Overall, the two countries have engaged with each other mostly in the context of multilateral organizations, such as the UN or the Group of Seven (G7) format, while pursuing some bilateral projects (for example, in economic and social policies or through intellectual exchanges). Recently, however, the two countries have been moving to deepen relations, including modest but notable steps in bilateral security cooperation that are of relevance to the United States.

The formerly low level of ambition to strengthen bilateral ties stemmed from a divergence in strategic priorities and interests, as well as an accompanying lack of awareness for each other's positions. Japan has focused on its deteriorating regional security environment throughout the post-Cold War era, relying heavily on the alliance with the United States to cope with the growing threats posed by China and North Korea. Germany, at a distance of more than 5,500 miles from Japan, did not seem to have any role to play in those security dynamics. For its part, Germany showed a similar disinterest in exercising influence in the Indo-Pacific region, instead focusing on continental Europe as its main theater of concern. In Asia, Germany limited itself mainly to the pursuit of commercial opportunities, especially in China. Chancellor Angela Merkel (2005–2021) visited China 12 times during her 16-year tenure, underlining what many Japanese observers viewed as Germany's excessive focus on China and economics and Berlin's indifference to regional security dynamics. Beyond that, Germany and Japan also differed markedly in approaches to other policy issues, including climate and energy, immigration, and fiscal policy, further weakening incentives for cooperation and engagement. Divergences in the two countries' approaches to Russia also surfaced at times.

More recently, however, Germany and Japan are finding greater common ground for cooperation. Views of China have shifted significantly in Germany amid Beijing's growing global ambitions and assertive foreign policy tactics, as well as the domestic authoritarian turn under President Xi Jinping. As a result, the gap in perceptions and approaches between Berlin and Tokyo has narrowed, though not fully closed. German policymakers are now more interested in consulting Japan on China-related issues.

On a broader level, German-Japanese cooperation is also driven by a growing apprehension on both sides about the erosion of the rules-based liberal international order supported by multilateral cooperation.<sup>20</sup> Concerns derive not only from assertive actions by China and Russia, but also from continuing inward-looking tendencies in U.S. politics even beyond the Donald Trump presidency that have sowed doubts about Washington’s willingness and ability to exercise leadership in guarding the existing order.<sup>21</sup> Both Berlin and Tokyo are thus seeking partners that can contribute to a collective effort to help defend and build a resilient order. Recognizing the Indo-Pacific as the most consequential region for the future of the international order, Germany published policy guidelines on that region in September 2020.<sup>22</sup> The comprehensive guidelines represent a whole-of-government approach, covering security among a variety of other policy fields, such as economics and trade and the environment. Recognizing that Germany—as a trading state and proponent of the rules-based international order—cannot remain a mere observer of the region’s developments, the guidelines call for diversifying relations with countries in the region both geographically and in substance. Japan is seen as a key partner for Germany in the security field.

## German-Japanese Security Cooperation: A New Direction?

Germany’s security cooperation with Japan specifically, and with the Indo-Pacific region in general, has been more limited than that of the UK or France—the two European powers to which Germany is often compared.<sup>23</sup> This involvement gap stems at least in part from the different starting points of those three countries with regard to the region. Germany does not have territories or citizens permanently located in the Indo-Pacific as France does, nor does it have the kind of historic regional ties that the UK possesses through the British Commonwealth. Berlin has thus viewed the region from a more detached position that is shaped largely by its economic interests but not, until recently, by a sense of concern about regional stability and implications for the international order. Furthermore, mutual engagement in security affairs between Germany and Japan has also been constrained by the two countries’ post-1945 anti-

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<sup>20</sup> Alexandra Sakaki, “Strategic Convergence: Towards a New Chapter in Germany–Japan Ties,” Royal United Services Institute, April 20, 2021.

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, “Opening of the Munich Security Conference 2020 [Eröffnung Der Münchner Sicherheitskonferenz 2020],” Munich, Office of the President of Germany, February 14, 2020; and Miguel Berger, “160 Years of German-Japanese Friendship [160 Jahre Deutsch-Japanische Freundschaft],” *JDZB Echo*, June 2021.

<sup>22</sup> The guidelines quote then-Foreign Minister Heiko Maas stating that “more than anywhere else, the shape of tomorrow’s international order will be decided in the Indo-Pacific” (Government of Germany, *Policy Guidelines for the Indo-Pacific*, Berlin, August 2020a, p. 2).

<sup>23</sup> For a detailed comparison, see Hornung, 2020.

militarist identities.<sup>24</sup> Both have held defense-oriented and circumscribed conceptions of their security policy roles.<sup>25</sup> Finally, whereas Japan as a maritime trading nation has substantial naval capabilities, Germany has for decades downsized its naval forces, thereby adding impediments to mutual engagement in the maritime field. As of January 2021, the German navy had only 47 ships available, including ten frigates, five corvettes, and six submarines, as well as 12 minesweepers.<sup>26</sup> In recent years, Germany has had difficulties sending naval assets even to NATO-led or EU-led operations.

Until 2021, German-Japanese security cooperation revolved mainly around mutual consultations, most of which took place below the ministerial level. The two countries have had regular consultations between the defense authorities (every two years) and the foreign affairs and defense authorities (every one to two years), both at the level of political director.<sup>27</sup> Aside from these regular meetings, dialogue has occurred through sporadic exchanges by the defense ministers or vice ministers (state minister in Germany's case) or the respective chiefs of staff of the military service branches. Although the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic forced such encounters mostly into the virtual sphere, the frequency has nonetheless gradually increased over the past few years, including four ministerial exchanges in 2020.<sup>28</sup>

In April 2021, the two countries upgraded their security dialogue by holding their first ever 2+2 consultations between their foreign and defense ministers. Although the meeting did not result in a joint declaration, key topics on the agenda included Germany's Indo-Pacific outlook, the planned visit of the German frigate *Bayern* to Japan, and regional security challenges.<sup>29</sup> The establishment of the meeting constituted a win for Japan, which favored this dialogue format, whereas the German side had been more reluctant, owing to turf battles between the foreign and defense ministries, which are traditionally led by different coalition partners.

So far, Germany and Japan have not cooperated in the defense-industrial sector. Although the two sides signed an agreement on joint development of new defense technology in July 2017, it took until March 2021 to conclude an intelligence-sharing agreement. Both of these agreements are a prerequisite for joint research, development, and production of defense equipment because

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<sup>24</sup> Thomas U. Berger, *Cultures of Antimilitarism: National Security in Germany and Japan*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998; and Andrew L. Oros, *Japan's Security Renaissance: New Policies and Politics for the Twenty-First Century*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2017.

<sup>25</sup> Alexandra Sakaki, Hanns W. Maull, Kerstin Lukner, Ellis S. Krauss, and Thomas U. Berger, *Reluctant Warriors: Germany, Japan, and Their U.S. Alliance Dilemma*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2020.

<sup>26</sup> Government of Germany, Federal Armed Forces, "Naval Command Annual Report 2021 [Marinekommando Jahresbericht 2021]," 2021a.

<sup>27</sup> All regular and irregular meetings in the security field with Germany are listed in the appendix of Japan's annual *Defense of Japan* white papers. The most recent white papers can be found on Japan's Ministry of Defense website (Government of Japan, Ministry of Defense, homepage, undated a).

<sup>28</sup> Government of Japan, Ministry of Defense, *Defense of Japan 2021*, 2021, p. 86.

<sup>29</sup> Government of Japan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Japan-Germany Foreign and Defense Ministers' Meeting ('2+2')," press release, April 13, 2021; and Oros, 2017.

of the sensitive nature of the information involved. In 2020, Germany and France considered involving Japan in their development project for a new generation marine patrol aircraft by 2035, hoping to draw on Japan's P-1 airplane technology. However, because Berlin also needed a stop-gap plane to substitute for platforms in its current fleet (due to be retired in 2025), the Japanese aircraft was seen as unsuitable because of risks of delays in the certification process.<sup>30</sup>

Nevertheless, the agreements on joint defense development and intelligence-sharing provide the basis for Germany and Japan to cooperate more closely in sensitive areas, such as cybersecurity, space, and management of the electromagnetic spectrum.<sup>31</sup> In addition, the two sides already conduct a regular digital dialogue that includes industry representatives to discuss 5G telecommunications, data security, artificial intelligence, and other issues.<sup>32</sup>

To date, the armed forces of Germany and Japan have only had limited contact through UN operations, Japan-EU exercises, and a few bilateral goodwill naval exercises and mutual port calls.<sup>33</sup> However, bilateral defense contacts intensified following Germany's deployment of the frigate *Bayern* to the Indo-Pacific from August 2021 to February 2022, including a stop in Japan in November 2021. The vessel's dispatch signifies Germany's "contribution to the preservation of the rules-based order," according to then-Federal Minister of Defense Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer.<sup>34</sup> Japan welcomed the ship's deployment as a sign of political solidarity with regional partners.<sup>35</sup> Berlin underlined Japan's significance as a security partner by sending both Inspector General of the Bundeswehr General Eberhard Zorn and then-Chief of Navy Vice Admiral Kay-Achim Schönbach to Japan on the occasion of the *Bayern*'s visit.

In addition to conducting several "passing exercises" focused on communication and maneuvering with the MSDF, the *Bayern* participated in Japan's ten-day Annual Exercise 2021 in late November.<sup>36</sup> Vessels from the United States, Australia, and Canada also joined the exercise in the Philippine Sea. The five navies practiced cooperation on anti-submarine warfare,

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<sup>30</sup> Government of Germany, "Government Response to Parliamentary Interpellation, Printing Matter 19/21584: Repair of Weapons System P-3C Orion [Antwort Auf Die Kleine Anfrage - Drucksache 19/21584: Instandsetzung Des Waffensystems P-3C Orion]," September 23, 2020b.

<sup>31</sup> Government of Germany, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Sign of Mutual Trust: Japan and Germany Sign Intelligence-Sharing Agreement [Zeichen Des Gegenseitigen Vertrauens: Japan Und Deutschland Unterzeichnen Geheimschutzabkommen]," March 22, 2021.

<sup>32</sup> Government of Germany, 2020a, p. 55.

<sup>33</sup> Hornung, 2020, p. 65.

<sup>34</sup> Government of Germany, Ministry of Defense, "Frigate 'Bayern' Starts in the Indo-Pacific [Fregatte 'Bayern' Startet in Den Indo-Pazifik]," August 3, 2021.

<sup>35</sup> In the initial plan, the frigate's route included a visit to Shanghai. Many observers, including in Japan, criticized this as sending an ambivalent message to the region. For more, see Hans Kundnani and Michito Tsuruoka, "Germany's Indo-Pacific Frigate May Send Unclear Message," Chatham House, May 4, 2021. However, China eventually denied the port visit after being briefed about the motivations for Germany's Indo-Pacific deployment.

<sup>36</sup> Passing exercises between Germany and Japan were conducted on the eastward leg of the journey in the Gulf of Aden, in the Indian Ocean, and near Japan's coast before the ship's arrival there.

to which the German frigate contributed with its sonar equipment and two helicopters.<sup>37</sup> Germany also participated for the first time in the monitoring of UN sanctions enforcement on North Korea by collecting information on illegal activities in nearby seas.

## New Federal Government: Prospects and Policy Options

In December 2021, Angela Merkel's 16-year chancellorship ended. A new coalition government was formed under Chancellor Olaf Scholz between the Social Democrats and two smaller coalition partners, the Green Party and the Liberal Party. A three-party coalition is a novelty in German politics and no small challenge in itself, especially given the parties' differing positions and priorities regarding such issues as climate policy, domestic social reforms, and fiscal austerity. Foreign and security policy issues were not a focus of debate in the September 2021 federal election, leaving initial uncertainties about the new government's approach.

Overall, under the Scholz administration, Berlin appears determined to continue strengthening its engagement with Indo-Pacific countries, especially those with shared values (such as Japan). Importantly, the coalition government has vowed to build on the Merkel administration's Indo-Pacific Guidelines and diversify ties in the region. The coalition agreement of November 2021 specifically calls for upgrading relations with Japan, including through Cabinet-level government consultations, a sign of strong political commitment.<sup>38</sup>

The ultimate dimensions of the Scholz administration's approach to China are still unclear, even though the coalition agreement explicitly addresses the importance of human rights issues, stability in the Taiwan Strait, and peaceful settlement of territorial disputes in the South and East China Seas. Although most policymakers in Berlin acknowledge the enormous challenge posed by Beijing, there is still some disagreement over the balance in Germany's policy between more-open pushback versus a more accommodating posture toward China. The Green and the Liberal parties have called for a tougher, more values-oriented policy line on China that clearly calls out China's enormous human rights violations. Chancellor Scholz of the Social Democratic Party, on the other hand, has made more-ambiguous statements, highlighting the need to work with China on global issues (such as the climate crisis) and emphasizing an interest in deepening economic ties. Some observers thus believe that the Scholz administration's approach will be similar to the accommodating stance on China that characterized German policy for most of the Merkel era.<sup>39</sup> Given that China policy has been driven primarily by the Chancellery in recent years, Scholz's

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<sup>37</sup> Government of Germany, Federal Armed Forces, "Maritime Exercise: The 'Bayern' at Annuaalex 2021 [Marinemanöver: Die 'Bayern' Bei Annuaalex 2021]," December 9, 2021b.

<sup>38</sup> Social Democratic Party, Green Party, and Free Democratic Party, *Dare More Progress: Alliance for Freedom, Justice, and Sustainability [Mehr Fortschritt Wagen: Bündnis Für Freiheit, Gerechtigkeit Und Nachhaltigkeit]*, November 2021.

<sup>39</sup> See, for example, Nadine Godehardt and Moritz Rudolf, "Germany's (Not so) New China Policy," *The Diplomat*, February 4, 2022.

position will have pivotal influence. Berlin shied away from openly declaring a diplomatic boycott of the Beijing Olympics in February 2022 on the basis of human rights concerns, thus sowing some doubts about the proclaimed new values-driven approach.

On security policy, Berlin is likely to continue the 2+2 consultation format with Japan and pursue cooperation in high-tech areas, such as cybersecurity and space. Such engagement will help foster greater mutual awareness of security issues, creating grounds for further cooperation in the future. The two countries will need to determine whether they want to pursue any defense industrial cooperation now that the two have signed the required agreements. A potentially restraining factor is that Germany has been focused on European armament cooperation for decades as a way to foster European integration and interoperability. Nevertheless, Germany and Japan could start a small-scale joint project on defense equipment, perhaps similar to the Franco-Japanese project on mine-countermeasures technology.<sup>40</sup>

Berlin will also need to decide whether it will continue to send military assets to the Indo-Pacific as a sign of solidarity and as an opportunity to engage with the militaries of like-minded partners, such as Japan. Within the German military leadership, there is strong support for further deployments like the *Bayern's* Indo-Pacific voyage. The German Air Force has announced plans to send six *Eurofighter* planes to Australia in September 2022, three of which would visit Japan on their way.<sup>41</sup> In November 2021, then-Chief of the German Navy Vice Admiral Schönbach also raised the possibility of sending a frigate to the Indo-Pacific region every two years.<sup>42</sup> Both would likely be welcome steps in Tokyo. However, the Scholz government has not publicly stated whether it will continue to pursue such engagement.<sup>43</sup>

Regardless, the physical distances involved and the lack of military resources after decades of underinvestment will continue to pose constraints on Germany's ability to demonstrate presence in the region. From late 2021, the intensifying Ukraine crisis that ultimately resulted in war underlined the need for Germany to make stronger contributions through security engagement within the European sphere, which could further tie up Bundeswehr resources. Apart from dispatching military assets to the Indo-Pacific, Berlin could pursue other means of regional security engagement: for example, through deployments of military representatives, such as personnel exchanges, liaison officers, observers dispatched to regional maneuvers, or officers accompanying ships of other nations.<sup>44</sup> Germany could also push other European countries to

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<sup>40</sup> Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, "MHI Concludes Contract for France-Japan Joint Research Project," press release, Tokyo, Bloomberg, March 31, 2021.

<sup>41</sup> Vivienne Machi, "As Europe Looks to the Indo-Pacific, so Does the Luftwaffe," *Defense News*, November 5, 2021.

<sup>42</sup> "German Navy Chief Looks to Send Vessels to Indo-Pacific Every 2 Years," *Kyodo News*, November 7, 2021.

<sup>43</sup> As of this writing (February 2022).

<sup>44</sup> Indeed, Germany has already started to move in such a direction by, for example, sending liaison officers to the Singapore Navy's Information Fusion Center and to the Enforcement Coordination Cell in Yokosuka, Japan, with the latter monitoring the UN sanctions regime on North Korea.

coordinate more on joint presence missions by combining personnel and assets, in line with the EU's Indo-Pacific strategy.

Germany's Indo-Pacific turn, the advent of the coalition government after Merkel's long rule, and the emphasis on a values-oriented foreign policy have raised some level of expectations in Tokyo about a more balanced approach to the Indo-Pacific by Berlin that goes beyond narrow commercial interests in China. Should the Scholz government be seen as continuing to pursue an overly restrained and accommodating approach toward Beijing in the face of violations of international norms and rules, however, there is a risk that Tokyo's confidence in working with Berlin could be undermined.

## Implications for the United States

Hosting the largest U.S. troop contingent in Europe and Asia, respectively, Germany and Japan are central allies for the United States. The two countries wield significant international clout as the world's third (Japan) and fourth (Germany) largest economies, as well as through their membership in such formats as the G7 and, in Germany's case, the EU. The deepening of ties between Berlin and Tokyo—including in the security policy field—is thus highly beneficial for Washington. Through dialogue and greater mutual awareness, Germany and Japan can contribute to building stronger bilateral foundations for coordinated or collective action that may involve other partners, including the United States. Although security cooperation between Berlin and Tokyo may still be in its infancy, the two sides have laid the groundwork for expanding ties in the coming years.

The Biden administration has emphasized the U.S. alliance network around the globe as a key asset for U.S. foreign policy. However, when it comes to security affairs in the Indo-Pacific, U.S. policy has given some observers the impression that it discounts the value of European engagement (with the possible exception of the UK), both because of a lack of European hard-power resources and a persistent hesitancy on the part of many key European actors to adopt a more competitive China policy. For many Europeans, the announcement of the AUKUS strategic partnership between the United States, Australia, and the UK in September 2021 reflected this tension. Not only was the pact announced on the same day that the EU was scheduled to unveil its Indo-Pacific strategy, thus stealing Europe's spotlight, it was also made without prior consultations with France, which lost a multibillion-dollar submarine deal with Australia as a result. This signaled disregard for France's Indo-Pacific engagement, which had centered on relations with Australia as a key pillar.

It would be shortsighted for the United States to discount European (including German) engagement with the Indo-Pacific simply because such actors tend to lack substantial hard-power resources and differ with the United States on their approach to China policy. First, security cooperation with the region will increase European awareness of the evolving challenges and threats to stability that the region faces from China. This will enable greater cooperation on joint

international messaging that reflects solidarity and consensus with the United States on important regional dynamics. For example, in May 2021, Japan and the EU for the first time affirmed the “importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait” in a joint statement, thus echoing U.S. concerns about Chinese military activities around the island.<sup>45</sup> Germany plays a key role in fostering consensus among EU member states on such issues. Not only do such statements underline European interest in the region, but they also complicate the Chinese decisionmaking calculus (for example, with regard to the potential use of force against Taiwan).

Second, European countries, such as Germany, may feel more comfortable engaging in nontraditional security issues in the Indo-Pacific, such as climate-related issues, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts, counter-piracy and transnational crime, or threats to marine biodiversity and overfishing. A root cause of many of these policy problems is weak governance capabilities by regional countries—an issue that also affects traditional security dynamics. Thus, contributions by Germany and other European countries toward strengthening such governance capabilities could contribute to shifting dynamics in the traditional security field as well.

Third, rather than emphasizing geography in their engagements, the United States, Japan, and European countries can foster cooperation through a focus on particular dimensions of security challenges. Cyber threats, disinformation campaigns, and gray-zone tactics, for example, concern all three sides and do not necessarily have particular regional boundaries. Likewise, any progress in the field of arms control will need to involve both Russia and China as key military powers and therefore needs to incorporate broader European and Asian perspectives. The February 2022 China-Russia summit meeting underlined the growing ties between the two sides with an expression of mutual support for each other’s regional goals on Taiwan and on NATO enlargement. Against the background of these developments, the United States can facilitate engagement between Japan and Europe by focusing on such common concerns. The United States will benefit in the long run by drawing on key regional allies Germany and Japan in this endeavor.

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<sup>45</sup> Charles Michel, Ursula von der Leyen, and Yoshihide Suga, “EU-Japan Summit 2021: Joint Statement,” European Council of the European Union, May 27, 2021.

# Chapter 4. The United Kingdom’s Tilt to the Indo-Pacific: An Opportunity for Trilateral Cooperation with the United States and Japan

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## Introduction

The shift by the UK to the Indo-Pacific has been a gradual process. Successive policy documents in the 2010s signaled a growth in the UK’s assessment of the strategic importance of the Indian and Pacific oceans while highlighting specific partners that have anchored the UK’s orientation toward the region, including Japan. The UK-Japan bilateral security relationship has deepened in recent years, creating opportunities to expand to trilateral coordinated engagement with the United States in the Indo-Pacific. Indeed, the UK’s decision to embrace the Indo-Pacific as a strategic organizing framework followed its promotion by close allies and partners, such as Japan and the United States. London’s “Indo-Pacific Tilt,” as it was described in its *Integrated Review* of March 2021, underscores that the underlying security challenges and economic opportunities of this interconnected region are substantial and cannot be addressed effectively through a siloed approach.<sup>46</sup> The *Integrated Review* also acknowledges that China’s assertive rise poses risks for the balance of power in the Indo-Pacific, with potentially negative effects for UK national security and the national security of British partners in the region. Physical distance and limited resources will necessitate a networked approach to the region’s security and prosperity, and partnerships structured through bilateral or plurilateral frameworks will need to be created and/or strengthened—a view that Japan and the United States share. Against this backdrop, the UK–United States–Japan relationship, in particular, offers opportunities for expanded coordinated engagement in the region.

## The UK’s Indo-Pacific Tilt: No Blank Slate

Although the UK’s shift toward a more active role in the Indo-Pacific is not entirely new, it nonetheless started from a low base. A noticeable and gradual shift took place in successive UK government statements and documents, such as the strategic defense and security reviews in the

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<sup>46</sup> Government of the United Kingdom, *Global Britain in a Competitive Age: The Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy*, London, March 2021.

years prior to Brexit. The 2010 National Security Strategy devoted only limited attention to the Asia-Pacific, focusing on it mostly as a region in which the UK saw promising growth.<sup>47</sup> Japan was mentioned as a country that the UK wanted to deepen its bilateral relationship with, along with Indonesia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). For their parts, China and India were described as key partners that were important to the UK's security and prosperity, and the United States was referenced as an important ally, with the Five Eyes intelligence grouping also earning a mention.

By the time the *Strategic Defence and Security Review* (SDSR) was published in November 2015, the UK's approach to the region had shifted noticeably.<sup>48</sup> In particular, the SDSR listed Japan as an ally and partner along with other close partners, such as EU member states, the United States, and the other Five Eyes nations (Australia, Canada, and New Zealand). The 2015 SDSR, however, still attached great importance to the Middle East and the Persian Gulf, while recognizing that the UK's national interests were gradually shifting toward the Asia-Pacific through deepening economic contacts with countries including Indonesia, Malaysia, and South Korea.

Although terrorism remained a serious threat, the return of state-based threats (specifically from Russia at the time) was a particular cause for concern and has gradually shifted the UK's focus to the wider rules-based international order. China, however, was not mentioned among the challenges to regional peace and stability. Indeed, just one month prior to the release of the 2015 SDSR, Chinese President Xi Jinping marked the height of the "Golden Era of UK-China Relations" with a state visit that resulted in £40 billion (\$60 billion) in bilateral deals.<sup>49</sup> The UK's strategy toward the region came to be characterized by some, such as then-Foreign and Commonwealth Office Director for Asia Stephen Lillie, as an "all-of-Asia" strategy.<sup>50</sup> The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Minister for Asia, Mark Field, repeated this strategy in 2018.<sup>51</sup> However, one critique of such a strategy has been that it lacked prioritization, did not provide a strong, long-term vision for the UK's role in the region, and saw little by way of implementation plans.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Government of the United Kingdom, *A Strong Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The National Security Strategy*, London, October 2010.

<sup>48</sup> Government of the United Kingdom, *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015: A Secure and Prosperous United Kingdom*, London, November 2015.

<sup>49</sup> Government of the United Kingdom, Trade and Investment, "Chinese State Visit: Up to £40 Billion Deals Agreed," October 23, 2015.

<sup>50</sup> Stephen Lillie, "The United Kingdom and the Asia-Pacific Region," Government of the United Kingdom, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, March 15, 2016.

<sup>51</sup> Mark Field, "The UK and All of Asia, a Modern Partnership: Mark Field's Speech," Government of the United Kingdom, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, August 14, 2018.

<sup>52</sup> Cleo Paskal, *Indo-Pacific Strategies, Perceptions and Partnerships: The View from Seven Countries*, London: Chatham House, March 2021.

As the UK's interest in the region grew and evolved, led by the efforts of former Prime Minister Abe Shinzō, who elevated the role of India and the Indian Ocean region and shifted toward a new strategic framework centered on a “free and open Indo-Pacific,” accompanied by supporting strategies and resources to advance such a goal in 2016.<sup>53</sup> Abe previewed such a vision of the “confluence” of the Indian and Pacific oceans in a speech to the Indian parliament in 2007 during his first stint in office, arguing for an emphasis on a “broader Asia” defined less by graphic boundaries and more by cooperation and collaboration between democratic nations to uphold freedom and prosperity.<sup>54</sup> By 2018, the United States had formally announced its Indo-Pacific strategy and renamed the U.S. Pacific Command to the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command.<sup>55</sup> Abe's vision held growing appeal in Whitehall, as developments in the global security environment required the UK to go beyond “tried and tested methods” to sustain its international influence, interests, and values, as the UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office put it in 2018.<sup>56</sup> This shifting strategic landscape was also noted in the 2018 *National Security Capability Review*, in which the UK recognized the need to deepen engagement in the Indo-Pacific as one of three “primary centres of the global economy and political influence” alongside North America and Europe.<sup>57</sup>

In March 2021, the UK formally published a framework for its Indo-Pacific tilt as outlined in its *Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy* and its *Defence Command Paper*. A variety of push and pull factors led the UK to adopt such a strategy. First, the expanding economic and political influence of the Indo-Pacific region made it an increasingly important focus of UK national interest and a region where London sought to play a greater role.<sup>58</sup> In support of that goal, the UK indicated its interest in joining the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).<sup>59</sup> Acceding to that trading arrangement would ensure that 80 percent of British trade would be covered by free trade agreements and would put the UK at the heart of a network of countries committed to free trade

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<sup>53</sup> Government of Japan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Address by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at the Opening Session of the Sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD VI),” August 27, 2016.

<sup>54</sup> Government of Japan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Confluence of the Two Seas: Speech by H.E. Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan at the Parliament of the Republic of India,” August 22, 2007.

<sup>55</sup> U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, “Pacific Command Change Highlights Growing Importance of Indian Ocean Area,” May 31, 2018.

<sup>56</sup> Government of the United Kingdom, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, “Appendix: Memorandum from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office,” March 2018.

<sup>57</sup> Government of the United Kingdom, Cabinet Office, *National Security Capability Review*, London, March 2018, p. 33.

<sup>58</sup> Government of the United Kingdom, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2018.

<sup>59</sup> Government of the United Kingdom, Department for International Trade, “Trade with the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership,” July 20, 2018.

and rules.<sup>60</sup> The Indo-Pacific already accounts for some 17.5 percent of UK trade and 10 percent of foreign direct investment.<sup>61</sup> However, the 2021 *Integrated Review* also recognized that economic prosperity requires stability and that tensions in the Indo-Pacific are running high. Although this is not limited to concerns related to China, it is clear the “Golden Era” of UK-China relations has lost its luster. Chinese assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific and further afield, as well as the PRC’s rapid military and technological progress, is of increasing concern to the UK. China is described in the *Integrated Review* as an authoritarian state with increasing political, economic, and military power and is described as a “systemic competitor” and “systemic challenge to . . . [the UK’s] security, prosperity and values.”<sup>62</sup> The UK’s perspective of the changing regional security environment in the Indo-Pacific has increasingly aligned with that of Japan, the United States, and other close partners in the region.

## Heavy on Ambition but Light on Details

“By 2030,” the *Integrated Review* states, “[the UK] will be deeply engaged in the Indo-Pacific as the European partner with the broadest, most integrated presence in support of mutually beneficial trade, shared security and values.”<sup>63</sup> Although the UK’s ambition in the Indo-Pacific is clearly significant, the reality of its limited resources means it will require careful strategic planning and a long-term vision to achieve its goals. As of early 2022, no detailed Indo-Pacific strategy has been published by the UK government. What the *Integrated Review* did offer, however, was an insight into London’s strategic thinking about the region’s challenges and opportunities; how these relate to UK national security, interests, and values; and what pillars the UK’s policy approach will rest on.

The *Integrated Review* noted an overall concern over the heightened strategic competition in areas below the threshold of conflict and a new sense of what national security means. Strategic competition is not simply about boots, bullets, and boats—or the traditional uses of military power—but increasingly about innovation, infrastructure, and integration with partners as emerging and advanced technologies and critical national infrastructure are viewed as central to national security and resilience. Therefore, the *Integrated Review* prioritizes science and technology and focuses on both existing and future technologies, noting the importance of helping shape the rules of the road for critical and emerging technologies. Absent a stronger whole-of-government policy effort to protect and invest in such strategic technologies, China

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<sup>60</sup> Government of the United Kingdom, 2021, p. 54; and Veerle Nouwens, “The UK in the Indo-Pacific: From Humble Beginnings to Large Ambitions,” in James Bowen, ed., *Europe’s Indo-Pacific Embrace: Global Partnerships for Regional Resilience*, Perth USAsia Centre and Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, September 2021.

<sup>61</sup> Government of the United Kingdom, 2021, p. 66.

<sup>62</sup> Government of the United Kingdom, 2021, pp. 22, 26.

<sup>63</sup> Government of the United Kingdom, 2021, p. 6.

could come to dominate such technologies and critical national infrastructure, both inside China and abroad through exports and standards-setting.

The *Integrated Review* also placed substantial emphasis on diplomacy and trade, and the UK has already taken steps, including rejoining ASEAN as a fully fledged Dialogue Partner, applying to accede to the CPTPP, joining the G7 World Build Back Better Infrastructure Initiative, and launching a £22 million (\$31 million) Cyber Capacity Building Initiative.<sup>64</sup>

The UK has sought to characterize its enhanced security engagement with Indo-Pacific partner nations as “confident, but not confrontational.”<sup>65</sup> Since 2018, the UK has had a near-continuous naval presence in the region and recently concluded the deployment of its new *Queen Elizabeth*-class aircraft carrier through a multinational carrier strike group mission to the region (CSG2021). The 2021 *Defence Command Paper* describes the next steps the UK envisions.<sup>66</sup> These include the recent deployment of two roaming Offshore Patrol Vessels to the Indo-Pacific for the next five years, the deployment of a Littoral Response Group (South) from 2023, the dispatch of Type-31 frigates later in the decade, and a new British Defence Staff in Canberra to coordinate defense engagement in the region alongside the British Defence Staff in Singapore.<sup>67</sup>

Like other nations, the UK cannot achieve all its objectives alone. Collaboration and cooperation with partners in the region is seen as necessary to help the UK not just uphold the rules-based international order but also help shape it in areas where engagement is currently insufficient or where the rules of the road are not yet fully consolidated (such as cyberspace, artificial intelligence and other advanced technologies, and outer space). In terms of its approach, the UK seeks both to support existing regional architectures and to engage new minilateral groupings. A range of partners are highlighted in the *Integrated Review*. France and Germany are specifically mentioned as important European partners, building on their cooperation on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action signed in 2015 and their trilateral statement on the South China Sea of 2020.<sup>68</sup> However, the 2021 AUKUS defense partnership caused serious tension in the

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<sup>64</sup> Government of the United Kingdom, British Embassy Manila, “UK Becomes ASEAN Dialogue Partner,” August 6, 2021; Government of the United Kingdom, Department for International Trade, “UK Welcomes CPTPP Nations’ Invitation to Begin Accession,” June 2, 2021; Steve Holland and Guy Faulconbridge, “G7 Rivals China with Grand Infrastructure Plan,” Reuters, June 12, 2021; and Government of the United Kingdom, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, “UK Pledges £22 Million to Support Cyber Capacity Building in Vulnerable Countries,” press release, May 12, 2021.

<sup>65</sup> Government of the United Kingdom, House of Commons, “Carrier Strike Group Deployment,” *Hansard*, Vol. 693, April 26, 2021.

<sup>66</sup> Government of the United Kingdom, Ministry of Defence, *Defence in a Competitive Age*, March 2021a; Ed Arnold, ed., *Ad-Hoc European Military Cooperation Outside Europe*, London: Royal United Services Institute, December 2021.

<sup>67</sup> Nouwens, 2021, p. 24.

<sup>68</sup> Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom to the United Nations, “Note Verbale: UK NV No. 162/20,” New York, September 16, 2020.

UK's relationship with France that will likely require significant diplomatic efforts to repair.<sup>69</sup> Still, former Prime Minister Abe noted the potential for Japan to work with AUKUS, despite the tensions between European partners.<sup>70</sup>

The importance of the UK's growing defense relationship with Japan should not be underestimated within an Indo-Pacific context. As the UK's then-Foreign Secretary Liz Truss noted in 2021, "deepening defence ties with Japan is an important part of our commitment to ensuring an open and secure Indo-Pacific and a clear demonstration of Global Britain in action."<sup>71</sup> This was echoed by Defence Secretary Ben Wallace, who stressed that the UK was determined to "deepen bilateral defence cooperation" with Japan, as the UK's close security partner in the region with shared values and interests, as well as its commitment to the Indo-Pacific region. Combined with both the UK and Japan's relationship with the United States, this cooperation offers real opportunities for the UK to amplify and coordinate its engagement in the Indo-Pacific with two like-minded regional partners.

## From Bilateral to Trilateral Engagement in the Indo-Pacific

Although the UK can play an important role in the evolving Indo-Pacific security picture, it likely will not play the same role as the United States or even that of other regional partners, such as Australia, because of its more limited presence in the region. Nevertheless, it can be an important supporting partner to countries in the region through defense and security training, defense technology cooperation, and acting as a European framework nation for deployments of multinational task groups, as well as by participating in joint exercises and rotational deployments of military assets to the Indo-Pacific to ensure continuous presence among partners and allies. Here, the special relationship that the UK and Japan have with one another and with the United States will be particularly valuable.

The UK's relationship with Japan has been growing from strength-to-strength over the past decade. In 2013, the two countries signed an agreement enabling the transfer of arms and military technologies for joint research and development and the production of defense equipment.<sup>72</sup> In 2015, the two countries commenced annual 2+2 meetings between their

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<sup>69</sup> Justin Lee, Brian D. McFeeters, and Charles Hay, "AUKUS, Trilateral Security Partnership: Joint Op-Ed by UK, US and Australia," Government of the United Kingdom, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, September 29, 2021; and "Aukus: French Minister Condemns US and Australia 'Lies' over Security Pact," *BBC News*, September 19, 2021.

<sup>70</sup> Kiyoshi Takenaka, "Ex-Japan PM Abe Calls for Tokyo's Cooperation with AUKUS in AI, Cyber," Reuters, November 18, 2021.

<sup>71</sup> Government of the United Kingdom, Ministry of Defence, "UK and Japan Begin Talks on Deeper Defence Relationship," September 28, 2021b.

<sup>72</sup> Government of the United Kingdom and Government of Japan, Agreement Between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of Japan Concerning the Transfer of

respective defense and foreign ministers.<sup>73</sup> In 2017, they signed a Defence Logistics Treaty.<sup>74</sup> A year later, Japan's Ground Self-Defense Force and the British Army exercised in Japan for the first time.<sup>75</sup> In 2022, the two countries, describing one another as their closest security partners in Asia and Europe, respectively, signed a defense partnership that included the first RAA that Tokyo has signed with a European country.<sup>76</sup> Joint training, exercises, disaster relief activities, and defense and security technology were also part of the agreement.<sup>77</sup>

Admittedly, the U.S. relationship with Japan through the U.S.-Japan alliance is of a different nature and is the primary bilateral security partnership for Japan. This has, in the past, raised questions in some circles as to whether that alliance might constrain the scope for UK engagement on defense industry cooperation, for example, since the United States maintains a dominant position in Japan's foreign defense procurement. On the contrary, however, the rapidly changing strategic environment may be creating more space for flexible cooperation on defense and security affairs and enabling new groupings.<sup>78</sup>

If correct, such a development does not mean that the U.S.-Japan alliance will necessarily be replicated in its entirety with another partner, such as the UK. However, it likely does mean that the UK has an opportunity to pursue deeper alignment with Japan bilaterally, as well as expanded trilateral cooperation through a UK-Japan-U.S. partnership. Indeed, Japan has already begun expanding its bilateral security partnership with the UK through a recent agreement to develop a future fighter aircraft engine demonstrator and an agreement to explore further combat air technologies.<sup>79</sup> This follows the UK's noting in *Defence in a Competitive Age* that it needed to deepen and expand defense industrial relationships with close partners in the Indo-Pacific, including Japan.<sup>80</sup>

Similarly, trilateral maritime joint exercises and joint statements with the UK and the United States have also shown a complementarity in Japan's bilateral relationships beyond that of just

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Arms and Military Technologies Necessary to Implement Joint Research, Development and Production of Defence Equipment and Other Related Items, London, July 4, 2013.

<sup>73</sup> Government of the United Kingdom, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Ministry of Defence, "First Ever UK-Japan Foreign and Defence Ministers Meeting," press release, January 21, 2015.

<sup>74</sup> Government of the United Kingdom, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Ministry of Defence, "UK and Japan Strengthen Defence Ties," press release, January 26, 2017.

<sup>75</sup> Government of the United Kingdom, Ministry of Defence, "British Troops Exercise in Japan for the First Time," October 4, 2018.

<sup>76</sup> Government of the United Kingdom, Prime Minister's Office, "UK and Japan Set to Rapidly Accelerate Defence and Security Ties with Landmark Agreement," May 5, 2022.

<sup>77</sup> Government of the United Kingdom, Ministry of Defence, "UK and Japan to Develop Future Fighter Jet Engine Demonstrator," press release, December 22, 2021c.

<sup>78</sup> DSEI Japan, "Japan's Defence Industry: Ready for Business," August 27, 2019.

<sup>79</sup> Government of the United Kingdom, Ministry of Defence, 2021c.

<sup>80</sup> Government of the United Kingdom, Ministry of Defence, 2021a, p. 31.

the United States.<sup>81</sup> There will be more opportunities for such cooperation on issues including cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, infrastructure, coordination in third countries and multilateral organizations, and shared rules and norms in the region. Indeed, the recently launched Partners in the Blue Pacific initiative has seen the UK, United States, and Japan unite with Australia and New Zealand to coordinate and cooperate more effectively in the South Pacific.<sup>82</sup> Like in any policy area, there will be differences or challenges to address: how to approach human rights in foreign policy, how far data privacy regulations should go, on what basis cooperative infrastructure projects are selected, and, in the case of defense technology, how to exchange classified information. Ultimately, political will and leadership will be critical. Fortunately, in the Indo-Pacific, the momentum for deeper UK engagement with Japan seems highly encouraging.

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<sup>81</sup> Megan Eckstein, “CNO Gilday Signs Trilateral Cooperation Agreement with U.K., Japan Navy Heads,” *USNI News*, November 20, 2019; and Dzirhan Mahadzir, “U.S., U.K. Aircraft Carriers Drill with Japanese Big Deck Warship in the Western Pacific,” *USNI News*, October 4, 2021.

<sup>82</sup> Government of the United Kingdom, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, “Establishing the Partners in the Blue Pacific (PBP): Joint Statement,” press release, June 25, 2022.

## Chapter 5. Europe's Security Engagement in the Indo-Pacific, as Seen from Japan

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### Introduction

Tokyo welcomes Europe's increasing security engagement in the Indo-Pacific region. Although Japan's alliance with the United States remains the foundation of Japan's security and defense—and this will not change in the foreseeable future—the worsening security environment in the region nonetheless makes it logical and necessary for Japan to seek new security partners, hoping to build an “additional layer” of security partnerships, complementary to the alliance with the United States.<sup>83</sup> The fact that the European countries that are increasingly engaged in the Indo-Pacific region are key U.S. allies is helpful, facilitating not just deeper Japan-Europe cooperation but also opening up the possibility of Japan-Europe-U.S. cooperation. Already, there have been a series of joint training and exercise opportunities involving Japan, Europe—particularly, the UK, France, and Germany—and the United States, and these have at times also included other partners in the region, such as Australia and India.

Both the frequency and the substance of such joint training with Europe have grown rapidly over the past few years, and it has become more common to see European naval vessels sailing in the South China Sea and adjacent waters, constituting a new element of the security landscape in the region. At the same time, Japan has yet to come up with a clear overall strategy for what it wants to achieve through deeper security cooperation with European partners, and it still lacks certain essential legal and other frameworks to facilitate such cooperation. In addition to lingering skepticism about the seriousness and sustainability of Europe's engagement, addressing domestic challenges remains one of the most significant hurdles preventing Japan from making the most of Europe's increasing engagement in the region.

### Dimensions

There are five major dimensions of Europe as a security partner for Japan: (1) as a political and diplomatic partner, (2) as a practical military partner, (3) as a defense industrial and

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<sup>83</sup> James Rogers, “UK and Japan Consolidate Their Ties in the Indo-Pacific,” 9DashLine, March 4, 2021.

economic security partner, (4) as a cyber defense partner, and (5) as a partner cooperating with the United States in the region.

First, Europe—in terms of individual European countries as well as the EU and NATO overall—is seen first and foremost as a political and diplomatic partner for Japan.<sup>84</sup> Japanese observers tend to assume that Europe cannot make a difference in the face of China’s rapid military buildup and regard Europe as unlikely to get involved in military contingencies in the region. Even if those assumptions prove to be true, this may not mean that Europe is irrelevant to the security of the Indo-Pacific region, because there are many ways that European states could contribute to regional peace and stability short of participating in armed conflict. Some of the most consequential steps European actors could contemplate taking include implementing UN Security Council sanctions against North Korea and imposing greater consequences on China for its actions in the South China Sea and its human rights abuses in Hong Kong and Xinjiang. Vessels and surveillance aircraft from the UK, France, and Germany have participated in monitoring of North Korea’s illegal “ship-to-ship” transfers in recent years. Tokyo has long sought to raise Europe’s awareness about the security situation in Asia and thereby generate shared perceptions, and such activities are widely perceived to have contributed to a growing understanding across the European continent and in the UK about the security challenges facing the region.

Second, Europe has come to be seen more as a practical military partner in recent years, as a result of increasing military—mainly naval but, to a lesser extent, also involving air force—engagement in the Indo-Pacific region. Japan’s Self-Defense Forces, primarily the MSDF, have conducted a series of joint training and exercises across the region in cooperation with European partners. From a review of these activities, three new elements can be identified.

For one, the frequency of European military activities in the Indo-Pacific has increased substantially in recent years, especially those of the UK and France, which sometimes look almost as though they are competing with each other to expand their regional profiles.<sup>85</sup> Additionally, the assets sent to the region have been growing more substantial, including a brand new aircraft carrier with 5th-generation stealth fighters onboard (UK), an amphibious assault vessel (France), a signals intelligence vessel (France), and nuclear-powered attack-submarines (UK and France). Finally, in addition to joint training and exercises held bilaterally between Japan and individual European countries, it has become increasingly common to see various unilateral formats involving three or more allies and partners engage in such activities. In 2021, for example, the region witnessed a five-country naval exercise led by France and joined by the Quad countries (Japan, Australia, India, and the United States). Other exercises included amphibious training involving Japan, France, and the United States (and, partially, Australia) and

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<sup>84</sup> Despite the fact that NATO is a US-led alliance, it is usually regarded as a European framework in Japan.

<sup>85</sup> Michito Tsuruoka, “Making Sense of Europe’s Military Engagement in Asia,” *The Diplomat*, March 23, 2021a.

(separately) a large-scale carrier exercise involving the United States, the UK, the Netherlands, Canada, Australia, and Japan.

Third, defense industrial cooperation is rapidly becoming a new pillar of Japan's security ties with key European partners. For a long time, Japan was unable to participate in international defense equipment cooperation with countries other than the United States, a self-imposed restriction that the government of Prime Minister Abe Shinzō lifted in 2014. Since then, Tokyo has signed a series of agreements on defense equipment and technology transfer with European countries, starting with the UK and followed by France, Italy, and Germany. Because Japan has little expertise in international joint research and development, let alone arms exports, the progress so far has been quite limited. The first substantial cooperation may grow out of the December 2021 Japan-UK agreement to develop a future fighter jet engine demonstrator and to explore air combat technologies.<sup>86</sup>

Fourth, Tokyo is now particularly interested in cyber defense cooperation with Europe—both bilaterally with individual countries and with the EU and NATO. In addition to cyber dialogues with NATO and the UK, Japan participated in April 2021 in NATO's Locked Shields 2021 cyber exercise.<sup>87</sup> It makes sense for Japan to focus on enhancing its experience through exercises and exchanging technical expertise on military cyber operations with NATO and its individual allies and on rulemaking with the EU.<sup>88</sup>

Fifth, the fact that practically all the European countries that are getting more involved in the Indo-Pacific region also happen to be U.S. NATO allies is appealing to Japan.<sup>89</sup> It creates added value and opportunities for minilateral cooperation, as discussed below.

## Prospects

In the coming years, there will almost certainly be more joint training and exercises between Japan and European countries in the Indo-Pacific region. Although the dominant actors have always been and will likely continue to be the countries' navies, there could also be more air force engagement in the coming years. France has committed to establishing a rapid deployment capability for its air force in the region in the form of 20 Rafale fighters and 10 A330 air-refueling and transport aircraft that would enable it to project air power as far as the South Pacific within 48 hours. Additionally, Paris has been conducting a series of missions for this

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<sup>86</sup> Government of the United Kingdom, Ministry of Defence, 2021c.

<sup>87</sup> Government of Japan, Ministry of Defense, "Participate in International Cyber Exercise," webpage, undated.

<sup>88</sup> For an overview of Japan-Europe cyber dialogue and cooperation, see Wilhelm M. Vosse, *Japan's Cyber Diplomacy*, EU Cyber Direct, October 2019; and Hornung, 2020.

<sup>89</sup> Michito Tsuruoka, "European Resident Military Powers in the Indo-Pacific: A Regional Perspective," in Yogesh Joshi, Ipeita Nishida, and Nishant Rajeev, eds., *Securing the Indo-Pacific: Expanding Cooperation Between Asia and Europe*, National University of Singapore Institute of South Asian Studies and Sasakawa Peace Foundation, December 2021c.

purpose and has exercised with the air forces of other countries in the region, as well as with the United States. It is conceivable that the French fighters could conduct joint training with those of Japan en route to the South Pacific. The French Navy Chief has also aired the notion of deploying the aircraft carrier *Charles De Gaulle* to Asia, including Japan.<sup>90</sup>

The Japan-U.S. 2+2 meeting, bringing together the countries' top diplomat and defense officials, referred to Europe in its joint statement for the first time in January 2022. It stated that the two sides

welcomed greater engagement in the Indo-Pacific by European partners and allies, including the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and the Netherlands, as well as through the EU and the NATO, and expressed support for their expanded multilateral exercises and deployments.<sup>91</sup>

This indicates that Europe's military engagement in the Indo-Pacific is seen by Tokyo and Washington as something related to Japan-U.S. alliance activities, paving the way for greater synergies and even integration of efforts in addressing security threats and challenges in the region. The 2+2 document, immediately before the sentence quoted above, also expressed support for the respective countries' deepening cooperation with Australia, evidenced by the signing of a Japan-Australia RAA and AUKUS between Australia, the UK, and the United States. Taken together, these elements suggest the desire to reinforce the posture of the network of the United States and its allies, both in the Indo-Pacific and in Europe. The Biden administration's Indo-Pacific Strategy, released in February 2022, confirms this line of argument, stating that "we will build bridges between the Indo-Pacific and the Euro-Atlantic" and "we will bring together our Indo-Pacific and European partners in novel ways."<sup>92</sup>

Despite these developments, there is substantial lingering skepticism in Japan about the role European nations are likely to play in the security landscape in the Indo-Pacific. Some observers advocate what could be called a "geographical division of labor," arguing that European countries should focus on their own region rather than diverting scarce resources to Asia, where they cannot hope to make any meaningful contribution. If Europe plays a bigger role in European security, that would make it possible for the United States to devote more resources to Asia, such analysts argue.<sup>93</sup>

However, in light of the fact that the West's competition with China is multifaceted and the United States needs European support on a variety of fronts, not just in the military domain, it is

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<sup>90</sup> Nathalie Guibert and Elise Vincent, "Admiral Pierre Vandier: In the Indo-Pacific, 'We Face a Logic of Suffocation' [Amiral Pierre Vandier: En Indo-Pacifique, 'nous affrontons une logique d'étouffement']," *Le Monde*, June 10, 2021.

<sup>91</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Joint Statement of the U.S.-Japan Security Consultative Committee ('2+2')," January 6, 2022.

<sup>92</sup> The White House, *Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States*, Washington, D.C., February 2022, pp. 10 and 13.

<sup>93</sup> Elbridge Colby and Ian Brzezinski, "How NATO Manages the 'Bear' and the 'Dragon,'" *Orbis*, Vol. 65, No. 1, Winter 2021.

in the U.S. interest to involve Europe in the security of the Indo-Pacific.<sup>94</sup> Sending naval vessels is one of the most direct ways of getting to know about the rise of China in the region, which could lead to a convergence in threat perceptions. Still, given the limited nature of European defense assets and resources that can be allocated to the Indo-Pacific, it is of utmost importance to make a strategic choice regarding what to do and by which means. Although it is desirable for European partners to contribute naval presence in the region from time to time, one can also argue that Europe’s comparative advantage in its security engagement in the region is in cooperation on cyber, intelligence, and space, and these are the areas in which greater investments are likely to yield increased returns.<sup>95</sup>

## Policy Options

To seize the full potential of Europe’s increasing engagement in the Indo-Pacific, Tokyo has some homework to do. First, Tokyo needs to come up with a clear strategy regarding what it wants to achieve through defense and security cooperation with Europe in the region. The phase of building friendship is more or less over, and the relationship needs to start showing concrete results. Yet it remains unclear how far Tokyo is willing or prepared to go regarding more-robust joint training and actual joint operations..

Second, Japan will need to expedite the process of concluding RAAs—visiting forces and status of forces agreements—with the UK and France. Given the fact that the RAA negotiations with Canberra took more than seven years, Japan and the UK’s announcement of the agreement in principle after just a few months of formal negotiations seems to be a good sign, which could be followed by France. Without such agreements, conducting joint exercises on each other’s soil entails ad hoc arrangements every time, with heavy administrative burdens and a lack of transparency. RAAs, though technical in nature, are expected to facilitate such processes and help build a permanent foundation for practical military cooperation between the parties.

Third, Tokyo needs to change its long-standing mindset that the alliance with the United States is for the serious business of defense and deterrence, whereas defense cooperation and dialogues with all other countries are basically just for the purpose of developing friendly contacts. The United States has been, is, and will remain Japan’s only treaty ally, committed to help defend Japan. However, the distinction between Japan’s “ally” and “the rest”—not in a legal sense but in a practical one—is becoming increasingly blurred, and that trend is likely to continue, particularly among advanced countries that share fundamental values.

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<sup>94</sup> Michito Tsuruoka, “Europe in Europe, America in Asia?” *The Diplomat*, August 18, 2021b.

<sup>95</sup> See Ashton Carter’s remarks to the RAND webinar held on November 2, 2021, on which this volume is based (Ashton B. Carter, Mathieu Duchâtel, Alexandra Sakaki, Veerle Nouwens, Michito Tsuruoka, Jeffrey W. Hornung, and Scott W. Harold, *The Growing Role of Europe in Asia: Connecting the Atlantic and the Indo-Pacific*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, CF-A2070-1, 2022). On cyber, see Franz-Stefan Gady, “How Europe Can Help Defend Taiwan,” *Nikkei Asia*, December 17, 2021.

Japan and Australia are seeking to update their 2007 Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation, and there are press reports that one of its major objectives is to jointly “enhance deterrence and response capability” between the two countries’ forces.<sup>96</sup> Given that the terms *deterrence* and *response capability* were previously used only in the context of the alliance with the United States, the fact that those terms are now talked about in both Tokyo and Canberra policy circles as likely to be used in the Japan-Australia setting tells us something about the changing nature of that relationship. This development could affect the nature and narrative of Japan-Europe cooperation in the future and may serve as a harbinger of the eroding dichotomy between Japan’s ties with its U.S. ally and the rest, as Tokyo seeks to encourage all status quo powers to support a free and open Indo-Pacific order.

## Implications for the United States

As evidenced by the 2+2 statement above and the fact that the U.S. Navy has consistently been helping European deployments—particularly in Guam and Singapore, as well as Sasebo and Yokosuka (Japan)—the United States is already committed to supporting the development and continued evolution of Japan-Europe security cooperation. A logical next step could be to contemplate a joint Japan-U.S. strategy on how to ensure synergies between the Japan-U.S. alliance and Japan’s defense and security engagements with European nations. From Washington’s perspective, it is likely that there will be interest in exploring how to go about plugging Japan into U.S.-UK security cooperation as well, as demonstrated by the UK-led carrier strike group’s deployment to the Indo-Pacific in 2021 (CSG21) and its series of engagements with the Self-Defense Forces.

As long as the rise of China continues, Europe’s engagement in the Indo-Pacific region and the development of Japan-Europe relations are likely to continue as well. Yet, the most recent complication concerns Russia’s war in Ukraine, which raises questions about the sustainability of U.S. strategic focus on China, as well as Europe’s ability to remain militarily engaged in the Indo-Pacific. If the United States needs to send more troops to Europe to help reinforce the security of NATO allies (such as Poland, Romania, and the Baltic States) and sustain its intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance activities in and around Ukraine for an extended period, that could represent a constraint on key U.S. capabilities in other parts of the world.<sup>97</sup> European countries, which have more-limited defense resources, could face an increasingly acute choice over whether to focus more on Europe or continue their pursuit of engagement in the Indo-Pacific. The evolution of the Ukraine crisis is therefore a source of concern for Tokyo in terms of thinking about the future of Japan-Europe security and defense cooperation.

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<sup>96</sup> “Japan-Australia Security Declaration to Be Updated: Focusing on Countering China [Nichigou anzenhoshou sengen wo kaitei-e: Tai chuugoku de kyouryoku-kyouka zenmen],” *Sankei Shimbun*, December 29, 2021.

<sup>97</sup> Elbridge Colby and Oriana Skylar Mastro, “Ukraine Is a Distraction from Taiwan,” *Wall Street Journal*, February 13, 2022.

At the same time, however, the war in Ukraine and Japan's firm stance against Russia, including a series of tough economic sanctions in full alignment with the G7 partners, have brought Japan and Europe—NATO, the EU, and the individual European states—closer. There has been an unprecedented level of contacts and coordination between Japanese and European officials. Prime Minister Kishida Fumio's participation in the NATO Summit in Madrid at the end of June 2022 proved to be a symbol of such closer relations, given that he is the first Japanese leader to attend such a gathering. By standing firm against Russia this time, Tokyo expects Europe to show a similar level of unity when something serious happens in East Asia involving China.

## Chapter 6. Watching Allies in Europe and Japan Grow Closer from the Perspective of the United States

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### Introduction

Although the United States has characterized China as a strategic competitor, it does not enjoy sufficient power and resources to outcompete China alone. Instead, Washington is seeking to shape Beijing's choices and the strategic environment it operates in by mobilizing and coordinating with U.S. allies, what the Biden administration calls "a tremendous source of strength and a unique American advantage."<sup>98</sup> This means the United States needs to focus not just on working *with* its allies but also encouraging them to work *with each other*. As stated in the administration's *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance*, the United States aims to "work with allies to share responsibilities equitably, while encouraging them to invest in their own comparative advantages against shared current and future threats."<sup>99</sup> For the United States, working with these allies allows them to "pool [their] collective strength to advance shared interests and deter common threats."<sup>100</sup>

In this chapter, I examine how the United States views efforts by Japan and Europe to cooperate in the security domain. Specifically, I look at cooperation on cyberspace, military exercises and training, security agreements, and defense industrial cooperation. I argue that the United States supports these efforts under the concept of *integrated deterrence*. Although this support will likely continue, I identify one potential concern should Europe dedicate more resources to meeting the China challenge in the Indo-Pacific: specifically, that it may carry risks of neglecting or underinvesting in Europe's ability to meet the Russian threat in Europe.

### The View of Japan-Europe Security Cooperation from the United States

The Biden administration's Indo-Pacific Strategy that was released in early 2022 explicitly welcomed European participation in the region and acknowledged the strategic value of Europe's

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<sup>98</sup> The White House, *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance*, Washington, D.C., March 2021a, p. 10. These proceedings were written before the Biden administration published its full *National Security Strategy* in October 2022. However, much of the analysis in these proceedings aligns with the U.S. strategy outlined in that document.

<sup>99</sup> The White House, 2021a, p. 10.

<sup>100</sup> The White House, 2021a, p. 6.

increasing role for the United States.<sup>101</sup> In speaking about the interests of both the United States and other countries in the Indo-Pacific region, U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin has stated that “the United States and [the] region are more secure and more prosperous when we work together with our allies and partners.”<sup>102</sup> Toward that end, the Biden administration is promoting a strategy based on the concept of “integrated deterrence,” in which the United States will seek to leverage existing capabilities while developing new ones and use these in “networked ways—hand in hand with our allies and partners . . . [spanning] multiple realms.”<sup>103</sup> Four areas of Japan-Europe security cooperation that could prove particularly beneficial in support of integrated deterrence are cyber, military exercises and training, security agreements, and defense industrial cooperation.

**Cyber.** The cyber landscape is defined by increasing activity by malevolent actors. Because cyber security is a sensitive issue, U.S. allies need to identify key partners that share fundamental values and that have a proven track record of trustworthiness.<sup>104</sup> Europe and Japan share such values.<sup>105</sup> According to Melissa Dalton, then-Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy, Plans, and Capabilities, the United States needs to focus on multiple domains and deeper integration with allies, partners, and other instruments of national power.<sup>106</sup> For integrated deterrence to succeed, it is critical to have the latest technologies and the right mix of technology, operational concepts, and capabilities that together could “create advantages for us and dilemmas [for U.S. adversaries].”<sup>107</sup> Because no country monopolizes advancements in cyber, and because the approaches to cybersecurity of the United States and its allies differ, having U.S. allies cooperate helps socialize best practices; create a convergence around common threat perceptions, desired end-states, and doctrines; and minimize differences in cyber approaches.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> The White House, 2022.

<sup>102</sup> DoD, “Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III Participates in Fullerton Lecture Series in Singapore,” July 27, 2021.

<sup>103</sup> C. Todd Lopez, “Defense Secretary Says ‘Integrated Deterrence’ Is Cornerstone of U.S. Defense,” U.S. Department of Defense, April 30, 2021.

<sup>104</sup> Elli-Katharina Pohlkamp, “Why Cyber Security Should Be a Key Part of Europe’s Indo-Pacific Strategy,” European Council on Foreign Relations, March 17, 2021.

<sup>105</sup> Pohlkamp, 2021.

<sup>106</sup> Meredith Roaten, “AFA NEWS: ‘Integrated Deterrence’ to Drive National Defense Strategy,” *National Defense Magazine*, September 22, 2021.

<sup>107</sup> Lopez, 2021.

<sup>108</sup> Brandon Williams, Veronica Chinchilla, Evan Lisman, Amanda Tobey, and Emilyn Tuomala, “U.S. and Allied Cyber Security Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific: Workshop Summary,” Livermore, Calif.: Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, April 30, 2021. This logic could be extended to most tech issues (e.g., common standards of data protection, common standards of managing AI, common standards for countering disinformation).

**Military training and exercises.** Japan and several European countries have increasingly engaged in military training and exercises across various services.<sup>109</sup> For the United States, such activities carry three potential benefits.

The first is signaling. Having U.S. allies train and exercise together sends a message about their abilities and willingness to work together and the potential costs would-be adversaries face should they engage in revisionist behavior. This signaling complements U.S. efforts to uphold the international order because it demonstrates an international coalition of like-minded countries working together toward similar objectives.

The second benefit is accrued by individual allied armed forces. Exercises and training help U.S. allies learn from each other, be it honing specific skills, operating specific systems, bolstering their understanding of the region, or improving readiness. These all support integrated deterrence because they help deter coercion and aggression across the spectrum of conflict.<sup>110</sup>

The final benefit, and arguably the ultimate goal, is that these activities could lead to robust interoperability among allied forces. As exercises become more robust, U.S. allies may gradually develop interoperability between their forces, something NATO members enjoy much more among themselves than Japan does with individual NATO members. Although Europe and Japan are arguably only in the very early stages of developing such interoperability, their efforts nevertheless promise to bring them closer together operationally in the years ahead.

**Security agreements.** Formal agreements between Japan and Europe make it easier for their armed forces to operate together. For example, Japan and select European countries have signed Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreements (ACSAs), thereby providing signatories with a legal framework for mutual support activities. Similarly, Japan and a select number of European actors have signed information-sharing agreements that enable signatories to exchange sensitive information and, in some cases, technologies. These agreements not only help foster dialogue on sensitive operational issues but also allow the countries to develop military capabilities together and help provide operational support to one another. Currently, the focus is on Japan's signing of RAAs with European countries. All of these agreements support integrated deterrence by enabling allies to potentially better support U.S. military operations in theater. The more robust these agreements become—and the more they are exercised and utilized—the more they support an integrated deterrence strategy. In a regional contingency, densely networked U.S. allies would be better positioned to share classified information and provide critical rear-area support to one another, thereby allowing U.S. allies to operate as a more coherent—or even joint—force than would otherwise be the case.

**Defense industrial cooperation.** Integrated deterrence focuses not just on using existing capabilities but also on building new ones.<sup>111</sup> If Washington wants its allies to do more, either

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<sup>109</sup> Hornung, 2020.

<sup>110</sup> DoD, 2021.

<sup>111</sup> DoD, 2021.

individually or collectively, but those allies are not able to obtain the capabilities they need from the United States, then cooperation among these allies may help them fill in the gaps. Defense industrial cooperation is therefore a critical component of an integrated deterrence strategy, and the United States could encourage its allies to break down “outdated bureaucratic hurdles, export control rules, and technology transfer restrictions.”<sup>112</sup> Doing so would position U.S. allies to pool their research and development efforts to better harness new and emerging technologies toward military applicability. The decision by the United States to work with the UK to provide Australia with nuclear submarines via the AUKUS deal is a prime example of this.

## Prospects and Policy Options

For the foreseeable future, the United States will likely continue to support its allies in their cooperative efforts in the security domain; after all, the United States has been encouraging these allies to work closer together for decades, and U.S. strategy will likely continue to rely heavily on allies across all theaters.<sup>113</sup> In addition, the challenges presented by China will likely persist for years to come. This means there will be continued importance of cooperative efforts in the issue areas identified above.

That said, there is one possible area of concern for the United States. Although greater security cooperation among its allies supports an integrated deterrence strategy, European militaries increasing their presence in the Indo-Pacific may carry risks for European security, most notably in terms of taking resources away from deterring threats at home. The primary threat in Europe, of course, is Russia, as seen in the annexation of Crimea, information operations meant to disrupt European elections, and (most recently) its war against Ukraine. NATO remains, in the words of President Biden, “critically important for US interests” to meet current challenges, including Russia.”<sup>114</sup> Historically, there have been questions about whether NATO could prevent Russian aggression from achieving significant progress.<sup>115</sup> According to the Center for American Progress,

much of Europe’s military hardware is in a shocking state of disrepair. Too many of Europe’s forces aren’t ready to fight. Its fighter jets and helicopters aren’t ready to fly; its ships and submarines aren’t ready to sail; and its vehicles and tanks aren’t ready to roll. Europe lacks the critical capabilities for modern

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<sup>112</sup> Lindsey W. Ford and James Goldgeier, “Retooling America’s Alliances to Manage the China Challenge,” Brookings Institution, January 25, 2021.

<sup>113</sup> Jeffrey W. Hornung, “The Evolution of America’s Implicit Support of EU–Japan Security Relations,” in Axel Berkofsky, Christopher W. Hughes, and Paul Midford, and Marie Söderberg, eds., *The EU–Japan Partnership in the Shadow of China: The Crisis of Liberalism*, New York: Routledge, 2019.

<sup>114</sup> The White House, “Remarks by President Biden and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg During Greeting,” Brussels, June 14, 2021b.

<sup>115</sup> Nick Witney, “Building Europeans’ Capacity to Defend Themselves,” European Council on Foreign Relations, June 2019, p. 2.

warfare, including so-called enabling capabilities—such as air-refueling to support fighter jets, transport aircraft to move troops to the fight, and the high-end reconnaissance and surveillance drones essential for modern combat. European forces aren't ready to fight with the equipment they have, and the equipment they have isn't good enough.<sup>116</sup>

For example, according to one report, most of the German air force's Eurofighter Typhoons are not flightworthy, with only about ten ready for operations.<sup>117</sup> European militaries "are faced with reduced and outdated equipment (including materiel stock shortages) as well as a general availability crisis [that is] exacerbated by undertrained military personnel."<sup>118</sup> In the UK, for example, at least one of six Type-45 destroyers and a Type-23 frigate are immobilized because of the shortage of qualified personnel; to provide personnel for the UK's two new aircraft carriers, the Royal Navy accepted the early decommissioning of the helicopter carrier *Ocean*.<sup>119</sup> And then there is the issue of defense budgets. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has warned that EU members provide only 20 percent of NATO's defense spending, leading to a situation in which European countries are not positioned to defend Europe by themselves.<sup>120</sup> Therefore, encouraging European military deployments to the Indo-Pacific region could put stress on defense budgets and the forces Europe is fielding, thereby potentially detracting from NATO's focus on deterring Russian aggression in Eastern Europe.

Additionally, European countries are not necessarily on the same page when it comes to China. Although it is true that the EU's 2019 *EU-China Strategic Outlook* refers to China as a "systemic rival" and NATO's *NATO 2030* refers throughout to various challenges posed by China, European actors nonetheless continue to hold some significant differences on key aspects of China's ambitions, strategy, and behavior based on their economic and political interests.<sup>121</sup> In contrast to such states as Greece, Portugal, Hungary, and Croatia, which have been more hesitant to criticize China, such states as the UK, France, and Germany have become more willing to push back on areas in which they feel China has contravened international norms or principles. Given that Europe is already struggling with the rise of authoritarianism in Central Europe and the continuing challenges of maintaining the Eurozone, finding consensus on a China policy that

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<sup>116</sup> Max Bergmann, James Lamond, and Siena Cicarelli, *The Case for EU Defense: A New Way Forward for Trans-Atlantic Security*, Washington, D.C.: Center for American Progress, June 2021.

<sup>117</sup> Michael Peck, "Germany's Air Force Is Dying a Slow Death," *National Interest*, July 7, 2018.

<sup>118</sup> Munich Security Conference, *More European, More Connected and More Capable: Building the European Armed Forces of the Future*, Munich, 2017.

<sup>119</sup> James Goldrick, "The Royal Navy Has a Problem," *War on the Rocks*, October 17, 2017.

<sup>120</sup> "NATO Chief Warns EU It Can't Defend Europe Alone," *Defense Post*, March 4, 2021.

<sup>121</sup> Ford and Goldgeier, 2021; and Guy Chazan, "Merkel Comes Under Fire at Home for China Stance," *Financial Times*, July 6, 2020.

requires European countries to devote significant resources to the Indo-Pacific may be difficult.<sup>122</sup>

Together, these trends lead to the prospect that European countries may not be able to sustain, much less increase, their cooperation with Japan in the Indo-Pacific, with the goal of deterring China, without possibly risking their commitments in Europe, especially in light of Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine. If that occurs, it would arguably be harmful to U.S. interests. Conversely, if Europe's Indo-Pacific engagement does not come at a cost of losing focus on deterrence of Russia in Europe, it would likely be a positive development for the United States.

### *Policy Options*

Deterring China is not something one country can do alone; it will require a multilateral effort. As Secretary Austin said, "Resources are scarce . . . we have interests around the globe and we want to make sure that we work together to address all of those interests," and the United States welcomes other states from contributing their resources and capabilities to help in this effort.<sup>123</sup> Therefore, the United States will benefit from its Japanese and European allies developing and pursuing a broader understanding of the security challenges they face and what deterrence requirements are needed to meet them. That said, these allies may face harsh resource and capability realities that prevent them from doing more operationally. There are four options the United States could pursue to potentially balance the risks outlined above with the benefits that come from greater allied security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific.

**Ensure a proper balance in Europe's involvement in the Indo-Pacific.** The United States is likely to support its allies moving closer and European partners becoming more involved in the Indo-Pacific region. At the same time, the United States will likely remain cognizant of the challenges Europe faces from Russia and the precarious state of European military capabilities, a situation garnering extra attention since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The United States benefits from having a broad multilateral effort pushing back on China, but the United States will likely weigh resource and capability constraints as it seeks to devise an appropriate division of labor with its NATO allies, whereby the U.S. can focus most of its attention on meeting the China challenge while Europe focuses more on responding to challenges in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa.<sup>124</sup> This strategy, sometimes described as *back-filling*, could keep European partners involved in the Indo-Pacific but would seek to ensure that they focus the majority of their efforts on defense responsibilities in Europe.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> James Goldgeier, "Less Whole, Less Free, Less at Peace: Whither America's Strategy For a Post-Cold War Europe?" *War on the Rocks*, February 12, 2018.

<sup>123</sup> DoD, 2021.

<sup>124</sup> Goldgeier, 2018.

<sup>125</sup> Witney, 2019.

**Increase trilateral cooperation in the cyber domain.** Although it is unclear from open-source reporting exactly how deeply the United States works trilaterally with its Japanese and European allies in the cyber domain, the United States will likely need to promote trilateral cooperation in the cyber domain in order to protect U.S. national interests and enhance the capabilities of its allies. Given the increasing complexity, speed, and global reach of cyber threats, cooperation in cyber will become increasingly critical.<sup>126</sup> Trilateral and even multilateral cooperation can enhance coordinated cyber responses, shape international norms, and bolster defenses. Importantly, strengthened cooperation can be applied to both the military and the civilian cyber domains.<sup>127</sup>

**Be supportive of Japan-Europe defense industrial cooperation.** Given that defense industrial cooperation between the United States and NATO allies and between the United States and Japan lead to greater interoperability, Japanese cooperation with European NATO allies could lead to some areas of common U.S.-Japan-NATO interoperability. Admittedly, there is the potential for such cooperative endeavors to cause new complexities for the existing interoperability the United States enjoys with its allies (e.g., integrating European equipment on U.S. platforms). That said, such concerns may not prove to be insuperable barriers to cooperation, especially if U.S. allies have comparative advantages in a domain and seek to improve each other's capabilities through cooperation. The United States will likely want to maintain coordination with its allies' activities, however, to avoid a situation in which greater cooperation is pursued simply for the purposes of promoting an ally's domestic industries vis-à-vis its U.S. competitors, rather than for the purpose of obtaining technologies or capabilities that an ally requires. The United States will likely also seek to coordinate with Japan and Japan's key European partners to foster greater interoperability standards and mutual benefits from complementary capabilities, as well as to maximize efficiency and eliminate redundancy among its allies.

**Bolster security agreements.** The growing number and types of security-related agreements between Japan and European countries are certainly a net positive from the U.S. perspective, but the United States will likely want to encourage its allies to take steps to operationalize them to take full advantage of the potential benefits these agreements represent. For example, despite signed information-sharing agreements, Japan and its key European counterparts do not have the organizational frameworks in place to pursue greater intelligence-sharing. In contrast to NATO's intelligence directorate and fusion center, which facilitates real-time information-sharing among

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<sup>126</sup> Pohlkamp, 2021.

<sup>127</sup> European Union and Japan, *The Partnership on Sustainable Connectivity and Quality Infrastructure Between the European Union and Japan*, Brussels, September 27, 2019; Emily Taylor, Alexandra Stickings, Aki Tonami and Jun Nagashima, *Security at the Frontier: UK-Japan Perspectives on Cyberspace, Outer Space, the Arctic and Electronic Warfare*, London: Chatham House, March 2021; and Emil J. Kirchner and Han Dorussen, "New Horizons in EU-Japan Security Cooperation," *Asia Europe Journal*, Vol. 19, 2021.

member states, Japan lacks multilateral information-sharing capabilities with Europe.<sup>128</sup> Additionally, although ACSAs are positive steps forward for logistical support, Japan and European states should include logistical support in their exercises to ensure that they are training for ACSA-type support operations (e.g., provision of food, fuel, transportation, parts). Toward that end, the United States can also encourage these allies to complete the necessary certification requirements for individual platforms so that their armed forces are certified to conduct the type of support these agreements are designed to facilitate.

## Conclusion

Greater defense and security cooperation between Japan and key European partners is very much seen as a positive development in the United States. As included in a joint statement between Japan and the United States, greater engagement in the Indo-Pacific by European partners and allies, including expanded multilateral exercises and deployments, is welcomed by the United States.<sup>129</sup> The more U.S. allies cooperate, U.S. interests benefit. Although integrated deterrence requires integration across all domains and theaters of competition, a significant aspect of the strategy entails deepening cooperation and coordination among U.S. allies and partners, which constitute “the real asymmetric advantage that the United States has over any other competitor or potential adversary.”<sup>130</sup> There are four areas of Japan-Europe cooperation that are noteworthy: cyber, military exercises and training, security agreements, and defense industrial. For the United States, security cooperation between Japan and Japan’s key European partners in these areas helps foster greater resiliency and demonstrates to would-be adversaries that the United States enjoys an ever-strengthening coalition of like-minded partners that are committed to the same strategic interests.

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<sup>128</sup> Ford and Goldgeier, 2021.

<sup>129</sup> U.S. Department of State, 2022.

<sup>130</sup> Jim Garamone, “Concept of Integrated Deterrence Will Be Key to National Defense Strategy, DOD Official Says,” U.S. Department of Defense, December 8, 2021.

## Chapter 7. Conclusion

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Across the five preceding chapters, European, Japanese, and U.S. experts agreed on a wide variety of issues, highlighting the growing commonality of orientation in Europe, Japan, and the United States toward key questions facing the Indo-Pacific. Several points of agreement emerged that are worth briefly noting.

First, although it should not be overstated, there has been a sea change in European attitudes toward China. Even though differences in these attitudes remain among individual European countries, the general trend has been one of shifting from viewing the PRC primarily as an economic opportunity and a potential partner to a perception more accurately reflecting the threat China poses to the liberal international order, European values and interests, and the security of the Indo-Pacific. The European Commission recognized this reality in 2019, noting that China is simultaneously

in different policy areas, a cooperation partner with whom the EU has closely aligned objectives, a negotiating partner with whom the EU needs to find a balance of interests, an economic competitor in the pursuit of technological leadership, and a systemic rival promoting alternative models of governance.<sup>131</sup>

Across France, Germany, and the UK, this perception has taken root and helped to fuel a shift in interest in the region toward other large economic actors that are also status quo democracies, Japan foremost among them.

Second, reflecting this growing interest in Japan and the broader Indo-Pacific, there has been a growing adoption across European partners of language and frameworks that elevate the region's priority and situate it as part of Europe's key policy goals. As several authors note, Japan's "free and open Indo-Pacific" language, also adopted by the United States during the Trump administration and retained by the subsequent Biden administration, has helped shape the lens and language through which several European nations' foreign policy frameworks are articulated.

Third, there is still substantial variety across European nations' identities, interests, perceptions, and capabilities that require textured understanding for analysts looking to assess how broadly and deeply France, Germany, or the UK are likely to develop their defense cooperative ties with Japan. France is the only European nation with territory and citizens

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<sup>131</sup> European Commission, "EU-China: A Strategic Outlook," Strasbourg, France, March 12, 2019.

permanently living in the region, and it will perforce have to continue to play a substantial role in the region in the future. By contrast, Germany's post-World War II identity, changing rapidly in early 2022 under the pressure of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, nonetheless continues to leave it as the smallest of the three in terms of security presence and engagement in the region and with Japan. Finally, the UK, both by dint of its identity and its historical involvement, has ties to and aspires to play a substantial role in Indo-Pacific security affairs, in part through cooperation with Japan, as well as with Australia, India, and the United States.

A fourth point that all the analyses herein agreed upon was the advantageous nature of deepening Europe-Japan defense cooperation for the United States, with all of the analysts noting the desirability of the United States helping to facilitate such cooperation and some calling for exploration of joint U.S.-Japan strategy for incorporating and leveraging European interest in regional defense affairs.

How best to focus such interest—whether by focusing on military hard-power cooperation, such as training and exercises that might require Japan to do its “homework” by signing RAAs (as suggested by Tsuruoka), or on less kinetic forms of engagement, such as in the realms of cyber defenses, countering disinformation, intelligence-sharing, diplomatic coordination, and technology transfer—was a fifth focus. No one-size-fits-all characterization or approach is likely, since some countries, such as France and the UK, are likely to continue to be present in the region in most circumstances, whereas others, such as Germany or other European nations, may only be able to visit with naval or air capabilities episodically. Any strategy for enhancing such ties should therefore seek to advance each European partner's specific areas of interest and contributions.

Finally, as the United States, Japan, and Europe seek to coordinate and tighten their cooperation, any strategic thinking about the role of European partners in the Indo-Pacific and their ties with Japan specifically could strive to ensure that such engagements are additive to—or at least not subtractive from—European deterrence efforts aimed at deterring Russian aggression.

Overall, the chapters in these conference proceedings capture substantial details about the development of deeper French, German, and British defense ties with Japan; the factors motivating the expansion of such connections; their implications for the United States; and the prospects for their future development, as well as several potentially helpful policy considerations. They provide perspectives from across Europe, Japan, and the United States about an important trend in global security that is of interest to U.S. policymakers and their European and Japanese counterparts. Hopefully, these proceedings will serve to inform and advance discussions about this critical topic in the years ahead.

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