**Flexing muscles in the Asia-Pacific**

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The shift in geopolitical power from the west to the east makes the Asia-Pacific region more important to the United States today than ever before. The region is already an engine of the global economy, and major Asian countries are becoming global economic and political actors. Yet, as Asia’s importance has grown over the last decade, Washington has often been focused elsewhere. The world’s three foremost geopolitical players and leading military powers of the day—the United States of America, the People’s Republic of China and the Russian Federation—find themselves in a complex triangular relationship. America is in a state of confrontation with China and Russia; China and Russia are strategic partners; while the United States is bolstering NATO to oppose Russia and simultaneously expanding and intensifying its relations with Asia-Pacific countries in the form of the AUKUS pact and Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) to counter the rise of China, Beijing and Moscow have created an informal alliance to jointly stand up to the United States and its allies.

[Sneak peak into the star-studded 2nd Annual Pakistan International Screen Awards (PISA) 2021](https://nation.com.pk/07-Nov-2021/sneak-peak-into-the-star-studded-2nd-annual-pakistan-international-screen-awards-pisa-2021)

Recently, both Beijing and Moscow flexed their muscles by conducting the first ever joint patrol using warships in the western part of the Pacific Ocean during October 17 to 23. “The tasks of the joint patrolling were to demonstrate the state flags of Russia and China, maintain peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region and also protect facilities of both countries’ maritime economic activity,” Russia’s Ministry of Defence said in a statement. During the patrol, the group of warships passed through the Tsugaru Strait for the first time. The route taken by the joint Chinese-Russian patrol through the Osumi Strait at the end of their journey as well as through the narrow Tsugaru Strait between the main islands of Honshu and Hokkaido earlier in the week, has also attracted a considerable amount of attention. That’s because when the US Navy or foreign navies transit the Taiwan Strait between Taiwan and the Chinese mainland, Beijing condemns them as destabilising. For instance, after US and Canadian warships sailed through the Taiwan Strait earlier this month, the Chinese military’s Eastern Theatre Command accused the two sides of colluding to “stir up trouble” and “seriously jeopardise peace and stability” in the strait.

[T20 World Cup: Unbeatable Pakistan thrashes Scotland with 72 runs](https://nation.com.pk/07-Nov-2021/t20-world-cup-unbeatable-pakistan-thrashes-scotland-with-72-runs)

At 100 miles (160 kilometres) wide at its narrowest point, the Taiwan Strait is huge compared to the passages between the Japanese islands. The Osumi Strait, for example, is just 17 miles (27 kilometres) wide at its narrowest point. While the Chinese and Russian warships weren’t in violation of international law, a news segment broadcast on Chinese state TV showed just how close they came to Japanese territory. It was a power show to convey a message not only to Washington but the countries aligned in AUKUS and QUAD. The US is trying to rope in more countries into the Western Pacific and Indo-Pacific regions to contain its strategic competitors. This may have a negative impact on China’s maritime security. Against this backdrop, the China-Russia joint naval drill includes new subjects and displays high levels of mutual trust. China has a strong and reliable partner in the Western Pacific: Russia. This time, China has sent its most advanced 10,000-ton-class Type 055 large destroyer, while Russia dispatched the main force of its Pacific Fleet. This demonstrates that China and Russia attach great importance to defence cooperation.

[Pakistan strongly condemns cowardly attack on residence of Iraqi PM](https://nation.com.pk/07-Nov-2021/pakistan-strongly-condemns-cowardly-attack-on-residence-of-iraqi-pm)

In addition, the joint anti-submarine operations between China and Russia are also worth people’s attention. The People’s Liberation Army (PLA) Navy has sent multiple types of main battle equipment to the drills, including the fixed-wing anti-submarine patrol aircraft. This year, the US has increased spy ship activities in the South China Sea. By demonstrating joint anti-submarine capabilities, China and Russia have sent a warning to the US: The US nuclear submarines should not act rashly at the doorsteps of China and Russia, especially in the Western Pacific. In other words, if the US wants to conduct a strategic blockade and siege, China and Russia will be likely to coordinate their stance or integrate the power of both countries. This way, they aim to break the US strategic blockade and military encirclement, as well as to completely crush its attempt to use AUKUS for strategic containment. What Washington wants is to stir up trouble in China’s neighbouring countries. In this context, Moscow can coordinate with Beijing to counter AUKUS. Both China and Russia take a responsible approach to affairs in the Western Pacific region. They can coordinate their positions to speak out together in the face of US military hegemony on the sea.

[Pakistan, Iran to revive talks for free trade agreement](https://nation.com.pk/07-Nov-2021/pakistan-iran-to-revive-talks-for-free-trade-agreement)

For example, in August, the Type 055 destroyer reportedly sailed in international waters near Alaska. Some analysts believe this time, there is a possibility of the destroyer approaching the US again. In any case, the PLA Navy’s activities will always be reasonable and legal. The Pacific is not the sphere of influence exclusive to the US. To maintain its strategic interests, the PLA Navy needs to enter the deep ocean, such as in-depth areas, to exercise and practice its combat capability. It should make response plans to prevent the US military from disturbing its normal exercises. AUKUS keeps challenging strategic competitors such as China and Russia. But it is not capable of counterbalancing China and Russia at the same time. The UK’s defence expenditures determine that it cannot afford to deploy a major marine force in Asia for a long time. In fact, the main objective of the UK is still in the Atlantic.

Under such circumstances, China and Russia will boost their own national strength and military capabilities in the first place and then engage in active strategic deterrence. Besides, they can coordinate more on international occasions while the process is going on. They can also reveal Washington’s plots when the US woos allies to create military alliances and coerce other countries. In defence, China and Russia can cooperate more and display their strength and determination to maintain stability in the Asia-Pacific.