

Strengthening interoperability between the US and India in the Indo-Pacific



From vital sea lanes and trade routes to disaster response, the Indo-Pacific sits at the centre of global security and stability. For the United States, operating across this vast region requires constant readiness, strong coordination and the ability to respond quickly in a contested environment.

Headquartered at Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii, Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) is a major command of the US Air Force and the air component of US Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM). Its primary focus is to deter aggression and ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific. It pursues this mission through a strategy of “peace through strength,” which relies on credible, combat ready airpower and strong alliances and partnerships.

India is an important partner in these efforts, as the United States and India continue to expand cooperation through exercises, planning, and operational coordination. Bilateral defence trade and joint training with India have directly contributed to this growing interoperability.

General Kevin Schneider, commander of PACAF, highlights that “the growth in Indian and US bilateral defence trade has corresponded with

growing interoperability,” adding that “the importance of our partnership continues to grow, particularly as we face an increasingly complex and dynamic security environment in the Indo-Pacific.”

Evolving operational priorities

As the Indo-Pacific faces a multifaceted geopolitical environment, strengthening command and control and logistics in contested areas are a priority. To address this,

operational postures are adapting through agile combat employment, a concept focused on dispersing forces, improving survivability and maintaining operational tempo across long distances. This involves pre-positioning materials and operating from a network of smaller, dispersed locations to enable operations at speed and scale.

Engagement with partners like the Indian Air Force directly supports this adaptive posture, focusing on robust partner integration, increased

