

COMPARATIVE

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REGIONAL OVERVIEW

UKRAINE SEIZES THE HEADLINES AMID MOUNTING CONCERNS ABOUT CHINA

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International attention during the first trimester of 2022 quite naturally focused on the Russian invasion of Ukraine, amid heavy (and often breathless) speculation regarding its political, security, and economic implications for Asia in general and China-Taiwan in particular. Largely overlooked (except by us) has been the release of the Biden administration's *Indo-Pacific Strategy* and the classified versions of the *National Defense Strategy (NDS)*, *Nuclear Posture Review (NPR)*, and *Missile Defense Review (MDR)*. Still missing in the Indo-Pacific Strategy are specifics regarding the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF), first unveiled (sans details) by President Biden at last October's East Asia Summit, which supposedly encompasses the trade and economic dimension of the administration's Asia policy. Also still missing is the all-encompassing *National Security Strategy (NSS)*, which traditionally precedes these documents. It was reportedly sent back to the drawing board following the Russian attack.

Events in the opening trimester of the year also raised both hopes and concerns regarding the viability of the Quad, the increasingly more formal collaboration among Australia, India, Japan, and the United States. The Australia-UK-US (AUKUS) enhanced security partnership also made progress, to the delight of its members.

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The Long Shadow of Russia's Invasion

Russia's invasion of Ukraine cast a profound shadow over the region, with implications for just about every range of endeavor. As there is so much analysis out there, we merely summarize or outline key issues and concerns.

First, there are the *political* implications. The physical invasion of a sovereign country is an act of naked aggression, a throwback to the industrial (and pre-industrial) era. Moscow dispensed with fictions about “little green men” or “gray zone provocations” and sent in over 100,000 troops. This is a wakeup call for countries that thought such barbarity was a thing of the past. In the Indo-Pacific, the obvious analogue has been to China and its pressure on Taiwan to reunite with the mainland, a parallel that Beijing flatly denies. Nonetheless, both Taipei and Beijing are closely watching developments in Ukraine while examining lessons to be learned by their own defense establishments. For Taiwan, this includes increased emphasis on territorial defense forces and the purchase of “large numbers of small things” [already identified](#) as potential difference-makers were hostilities to break-out across the Strait. For Beijing it's the recognition that 21st century wars will be fought as much in the financial sector as on the battlefield. Like-minded governments have also sounded the alarm, reinvigorating national debates about defense policy (spending in particular) and cooperation to reinforce the rules-based order and the rejection of unilateral efforts to redraw international borders.

To the surprise of some, condemnation of the invasion hasn't been unanimous or full-throated. One of the most surprising holdouts has been India (discussed below), but it is not alone, as Kei Koga explains in his chapter on Japan-Southeast Asia relations. A substantial number of regional governments either abstained or voted against United Nations resolutions to condemn the invasion or the call to remove Russia from the body's Human Rights Council (HRC). They have also refused, almost without exception, to join the sanctions campaign against Russia.

That ambivalence stems from several factors. Most basically, there are longstanding relationships with Russia that typically involve arms sales or access to energy supplies. Abstentions by virtually all the Central Asian

former Soviet Socialist Republics were no doubt aimed at not upsetting their giant neighbor but looked to us like “whistling past the graveyard” since Putin could argue that they, like Ukraine, are not “real” countries but part of the glorious former Russian empire as well. In the UN HRC vote, there was some concern about punishing Russia before investigations of human rights violations were complete. Weighing most heavily is a fear of being forced to take sides between Western democracies and more autocratic governments. In the Indo-Pacific this is framed as choosing between Washington and Beijing but that is an oversimplification. A number of regional governments are uncomfortable with the values component of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific strategy; Russia poses no direct security threat to them, the China threat remains hypothetical, and they enjoy the fruits of economic exchange with Beijing. Pragmatism encourages ambivalence and silence.



Figure 1 Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy examines the site of a recent battle, in Bucha close to Kyiv, Ukraine on Apr. 4, 2022. Photo: Efremlukatsky/AP

Failure to condemn Russia or a readiness to tolerate its misdeeds has *practical implications*. All meetings that include Russian representatives now risk walkouts and paralysis, as Indonesia discovered as it hosted G20 meetings in this trimester. At the February meeting of finance ministers and central bank governors, held virtually and in person in Jakarta, Western officials [warned](#) Russia against invading its neighbor; the resulting tensions reportedly yielded a “watered down” statement on geopolitical risks as officials from both Moscow and Beijing objected to any reference to Ukraine.

Disagreements became more pronounced after the invasion. US President Joe Biden called for

Russia to be kicked out of the group; Indonesia, the chair, said it had no power to do so. Instead, at the April meeting of those same senior finance officials, Western representatives walked out as Russian delegates spoke; as Canadian Finance Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland, among those who walked out, [tweeted](#), “This week’s meetings in Washington are about supporting the world economy—and Russia’s illegal invasion of Ukraine is a grave threat to the global economy. Russia should not be participating or included in these meetings.” Russian officials [countered](#) that such meetings should not be politicized.

The G20 walkout is a worrying precedent for ASEAN. The ASEAN-plus meetings with dialogue partners later in the year are the concrete expression of ASEAN centrality, the regional institution’s *raison d’être*. Many of ASEAN’s dialogue partners had already expressed concern about being in the same room with Myanmar’s leader IF (and it’s a big IF) he is invited to the next East Asia Summit. If these leaders will not share the room with Russian officials either, ASEAN will be sorely challenged.

Economic anxieties abound

Finally, there are the *economic* effects. The Ukraine invasion has had several impacts. Ukraine is a critical source of foodstuffs and cutoff of those supplies [threatens](#) humanitarian crises. There has been an increase in commodity prices which fuels inflation. The invasion has slowed growth in Europe, depressing external demand for Asian goods. It also exacerbated global financial conditions, which hit Asian countries, especially those with weak fundamentals and high debt levels.



Figure 2 Grain elevators in the background at the Port of Odessa, Ukraine in October 2021. Photo: iStock image

Economic anxieties have been magnified by the COVID-related shutdowns in China, where the Beijing government’s “zero-tolerance” policy has resulted in the closure of entire cities. The pandemic’s spread to Shanghai, one of the most important nodes in global production networks, rippled around the world. The American Chamber of Commerce in China conducted a flash [survey](#) in the spring in which all companies responding—100%—reported they were negatively impacted by China’s policies concerning the recent outbreak. More than 15% said that operations in Shanghai were fully shut in the wake of the March COVID outbreak, while elsewhere 59% reported slowed or reduced production capabilities due to a lack of employees, an inability to get supplies, or government-ordered lockdowns. That matched a survey of 1,500 companies reported in [Caixin](#), the Chinese business daily (subscription required), in which 90% of small- and medium-size exporters failed to deliver on time during the spring outbreak, and 90% reduced production due to virus restrictions.

Still, assessment of the overall impact on the region was [mixed](#). The World Bank reduced its forecast for 2022, warning that the East Asia and Pacific region will grow 5%, down from the 5.4% projected in October. By contrast, the Asian Development Bank believes that regional growth will “continue to be strong,” with it projecting 5.2% growth this year.

Promoting a “Free and Open” Indo-Pacific

During “normal” times, a new administration is expected to first release its *National Security Strategy*, followed by its *National Defense Strategy*, ultimately followed by regional strategies, in our case an *Indo-Pacific Strategy Report*. But these are not normal times. While the administration released an [Interim National Security Strategic Guidance](#) report shortly after taking office in March 2021, it elected to reverse the traditional order of the set of security strategy documents, starting with the release of the [Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States](#) in February, referred to by many as the *Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) Report*.

The *FOIP* is not subtle in identifying the primary challenge to US interests in the region: “The PRC is combining its economic, diplomatic, military, and technological might as it pursues a sphere of influence in the Indo-Pacific and seeks to become the world’s most influential power.” It

cites the PRC's "coercion and aggression" which "spans the globe" but is "most acute in the Indo-Pacific" while further warning that "the PRC is also undermining human rights and international law, including freedom of navigation, as well as other principles that have brought stability and prosperity to the Indo-Pacific."

The FOIP report hastens to add, however, that "our objective is not to change the PRC but to shape the strategic environment in which it operates, building a balance of influence in the world that is maximally favorable to the United States, our allies and partners, and the interests and values we share. We will also seek to manage competition with the PRC responsibly." It further challenges Beijing to cooperate in areas such as climate change and nonproliferation: "We believe it is in the interests of the region and the wider world that no country withhold progress on existential transnational issues because of bilateral differences."

Other challenges include, in the order stated, climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, and North Korea (which "continues to expand its illicit nuclear weapons and missile programs," plus natural disasters, resource scarcity, internal conflict, and governance challenges which, left unchecked, "threaten to destabilize the region." Russia is referenced nowhere in the document.

The strategy has five primary objectives, each to be accomplished "in concert with our allies and partners, as well as with regional institutions":

- Advance a free and open Indo-Pacific,
- Build connections within and beyond the region,
- Drive regional prosperity,
- Bolster Indo-Pacific security,
- Build regional resilience to transnational threats.

Each objective has its own chapter, which further articulates what is desired and expected. The descriptions coincide nicely with the "five pillars" laid out by Secretary of State Antony Blinken during his visit to Indonesia last December, as we spelled out in our [January report](#).

For those wishing to avoid reading the entire 19-page document, the White House also provided a handy [Fact Sheet](#) summarizing the key points. It

opens by drawing from President [Biden's remarks](#) to his ASEAN counterparts at last fall's East Asia Summit: "We envision an Indo-Pacific that is open, connected, prosperous, resilient, and secure—and we are ready to work together with each of you to achieve it."

Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF): No There There (Thus Far)

Biden informed his ASEAN colleagues last December that "the United States will explore with partners the development of an Indo-Pacific economic framework that will define our shared objectives around trade facilitation, standards for the digital economy and technology, supply chain resiliency, decarbonization and clean energy, infrastructure, worker standards, and other areas of shared interest." The FOIP repeats that promise: "the United States will put forward an Indo-Pacific economic framework—a multilateral partnership for the 21st century" which will "help our economies to harness rapid technological transformation, including in the digital economy, and adapt to the coming energy and climate transition."

Yet as we go to print, details remain...forthcoming. So far, the administration has added that those shared objectives are now four "pillars" of work: (1) fair and resilient trade (encompassing seven subtopics, labor, environmental, and digital standards among them); (2) supply chain resilience; (3) infrastructure, clean energy, and decarbonization; and (4) tax and anti-corruption. The first pillar will be led by the Office of the US Trade Representative (USTR), while the other three will be Department of Commerce responsibilities. Discussions with interested governments will commence after Biden reveals the framework—expected during his May visit to Northeast Asia—with the target for conclusion of negotiations (and any resulting agreements) reportedly being the US-hosted Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Leaders' Meeting in November 2023.

There are rumors that USTR is leaning too far forward on some issues, pushing for standards that satisfy progressives in the US but are unacceptable for many regional governments (and even some US stakeholders). Those demands become even more problematic given [reports](#) that the US is not prepared to increase

access to its own markets for framework members.

After talking to regional representatives, Matt Goodman and Aidan Arasasingham of CSIS [offered](#) five guiding principles to improve the framework's chances of success:

- Offer more meaningful incentives for countries to join and make binding commitments;
- Aim for inclusivity beyond close allies and partners to attract countries from South and Southeast Asia and across the Pacific;
- Break out digital negotiations as a separate pillar of work to secure a high-standard regional digital economy agreement;
- Demonstrate the framework's durability by securing congressional support and offer sustained capacity-building support in the region; and
- Centralize coordination through a single high-level coordinator, either a senior White House official or designated Cabinet officer, and clarify the role of key US agencies.

One particularly thorny issue is Taiwan. Taipei has [expressed](#) interest in joining and 200 members of Congress [signed](#) a letter backing its membership but the Biden administration is wary. Both Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo and USTR Katherine Tai have been [noncommittal](#), although [Secretary of State Antony Blinken said](#) that the US is not "closing the door on anyone, including Taiwan." The administration's stance reflects concern that Taiwan's membership would anger Beijing, which would scare off other governments.

The limits of the framework are more troubling as the region continues to integrate. The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) went into effect at the beginning of the year and South Korea's membership was activated on Feb. 1. It now accounts for about 31% of global GDP and population and 27% of global merchandise trade. In an especially optimistic analysis for Australia National University's East Asia Forum, Shiro Armstrong and Yose Rizal Damuri [argue](#) that with careful management

RCEP "opens the door for a broad and ambitious conception of economic cooperation and the ASEAN-based secretariat. ... It can become a platform from which Asia-wide [liberalization] and integration is managed." With the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement on Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) also contemplating expansion, US failure to make the IPEF substantive risks its marginalization in this vital region.

China: "Our Most Consequential Strategic Competitor"

A month after the White House released its *Indo-Pacific Strategy*, the Pentagon announced, on March 28, that it had transmitted to Congress the classified 2022 *National Defense Strategy*. Until the promised unclassified version is released (or the classified version is leaked), we will have to rely on the Defense Department's [Fact Sheet](#) for details. It states that, "(F)or the first time, the Department conducted its strategic reviews in a fully integrated way—incorporating the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) and Missile Defense Review (MDR) in the NDS—ensuring tight linkages between our strategy and our resources." While noting that "Russia poses acute threats, as illustrated by its brutal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine," it nonetheless identifies China as "our most consequential strategic competitor and the pacing challenge."

According to the Fact Sheet, "the classified NDS sets out how the Department of Defense will contribute to advancing and safeguarding vital US national interests—protecting the American people, expanding America's prosperity, and realizing and defending our democratic values." It lays out the following Defense priorities:

1. Defending the homeland, paced to the growing multi-domain threat posed by the PRC
2. Deterring strategic attacks against the United States, Allies, and partners
3. Deterring aggression, while being prepared to prevail in conflict when necessary, prioritizing the PRC challenge in the Indo-Pacific, then the Russia challenge in Europe
4. Building a resilient Joint Force and defense ecosystem

It further notes that the Department of Defense “will act urgently to sustain and strengthen deterrence, with the People’s Republic of China (PRC) as our most consequential strategic competitor and the pacing challenge.” Other threats, again in order listed, include Russia (where the US will “collaborate with our NATO Allies and partners to reinforce robust deterrence in the face of Russian aggression), North Korea, Iran, and violent extremist organizations. It further notes that “(C)hanges in global climate and other dangerous transboundary threats, including pandemics, are transforming the context in which the Department operates.”

The Pentagon will advance its goal through three primary ways:

- Integrated deterrence, which “entails developing and combining our strengths to maximum effect, by working seamlessly across warfighting domains, theaters, the spectrum of conflict, other instruments of US national power, and our unmatched network of Alliances and partnerships.”
- Campaigning, which will “strengthen deterrence and enable us to gain advantages against the full range of competitors’ coercive actions.
- Building enduring advantages for the future Joint Force, which “involves undertaking reforms to accelerate force development, getting the technology we need more quickly, and making investments in the extraordinary people of the Department, who remain our most valuable resource.”

For more on the concept of integrated deterrence, see Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin’s Dec. 4 [speech](#) at the Reagan National Defense Forum, which we summarized in our [January chapter](#).

Nuclear Posture Review and Missile Defense Review Briefly Defined

Also in our January chapter we discussed the hopes or concerns (depending on where you stand on the issue) that the administration’s

Nuclear Posture Review would proclaim a “no first use” policy, while predicting that, at most, it would “merely stress their ‘defensive purposes’ as a ‘last report’ weapon. While we await the unclassified version for more details, the combined 2022 *Nuclear Posture Review and Missile Defense Review* [Fact Sheet](#) reaffirms our analysis: “As long as nuclear weapons exist, the fundamental role of US nuclear weapons is to deter nuclear attack on the United States, our allies, and partners. The United States would only consider the use of nuclear weapons in extreme circumstances to defend the vital interests of the United States or its allies and partners.” To have gone any further at a time when Russia is rattling its nuclear saber would have been very disconcerting to America’s Asian and European allies.

According to the Fact Sheet, the 2022 *NPR* represents “a comprehensive, balanced approach to US nuclear strategy, policy, posture, and forces. Maintaining a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent and strong and credible extended deterrence commitments, remain a top priority for the Department and the Nation.”

The Fact Sheet also states that the *MDR* “provides a framework for US missile defense that is informed by the evolving missile threat environment. Missiles are a principal means for projecting military power, which makes missile defense a key component of integrated deterrence.” Hopefully the unclassified versions will put a little more meat on the bones of both reports.

Quad Hopes and Concerns

Events in the opening trimester of the year also raised both hopes and concerns regarding the viability of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (or “Quad”), the increasingly more formal collaboration among Australia, India, Japan, and the United States.

The hopes came in the form of the election of conservative Yoon Suk-yul as South Korea’s new president on March 9; his inauguration occurred May 10. Yoon has promised a more pro-US approach than his progressive predecessor, while also waving olive branches toward Tokyo. He further pledged, during a wide-ranging April 24 [interview](#) with the *Wall Street Journal*, that, if invited, he will “positively review joining” the

Quad; Korea is already associated with the Quad-plus, which has focused primarily on pandemic relief.



Figure 3 South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol dines with US Military officials at Camp Humphreys in South Korea in April, 2022. Photo: Wall Street Journal

Some have also [speculated](#) that Seoul might replace New Delhi as the fourth Quad member, given alleged “frustration” with India over its abstentions during UN General Assembly votes related to Ukraine (not to mention its continued purchases of Russia gas, oil, and wheat). These concerns seem misplaced at present, in part because Washington and others have expressed “understanding” over India’s difficult position—Russia remains India’s primary arms supplier—and partly because Delhi’s criticisms seem to have grown louder since reports began emerging about Russian atrocities at Bucha and elsewhere.

At the April 11 “2+2” [meeting](#) in Washington DC, Indian Defense Minister Rajnath Singh, and Minister of External Affairs Dr. S. Jaishankar joined Secretaries Blinken and Austin in affirming their “common strategic interests” and “abiding commitment to the rules-based international order,” while agreeing “to continue charting an ambitious course in the US-India partnership.” The four senior ministers also “agreed to maintain close consultations on the ongoing crisis in Ukraine, including on humanitarian assistance efforts, and echoed support for an independent investigation into the brutal violence deployed against civilians in Bucha.” Prime Minister Modi, in his April 22 “[Joint Statement](#) on the Visit of the Prime Minister of UK to India: Towards shared security and prosperity through national resilience” joined British Prime Minister Boris Johnson in expressing “in strongest terms their concern about the ongoing conflict and humanitarian

situation in Ukraine.” The two leaders “unequivocally condemned civilian deaths, and reiterated the need for an immediate cessation of hostilities and a peaceful resolution of the conflict,” and the need for “respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of states.”

All eyes will be on Tokyo as the Quad leaders begin their second in-person summit—the first was held in Washington in October—where Ukraine is sure to again be a topic of discussion.

Earlier in the trimester, Secretary Blinken met with his Australian, Indian, and Japanese Quad counterparts in Canberra on Feb. 11 to reaffirm their “commitment to supporting Indo Pacific countries’ efforts to advance a free and open Indo-Pacific—a region which is inclusive and resilient, and in which states strive to protect the interests of their people, free from coercion.” Their “[Joint Statement](#) on Quad Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific focused on their joint fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and their practical cooperation “to address regional challenges, including humanitarian assistance and disaster response (HADR), maritime security, counter-terrorism, countering disinformation, and cyber security.” The foundation for Quad cooperation, and that of other regional mechanisms, is, as Blinken [noted](#), “that the issues that are really having an impact...whether it's climate, whether it's COVID, whether it's the impact of emerging technologies—not a single one of these issues can be effectively dealt with by any one of us acting alone.”



Figure 4 Meeting of the Quad foreign ministers in Melbourne, Australia on Feb. 11, 2022. Photo: Kevin Lamarque/AP

There was no reference to the then-impending Russian invasion of Ukraine or the rising challenge posed by Beijing, although their reiteration of “the importance of adherence to

international law, particularly as reflected in the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), to meet challenges to the maritime rules-based order, including in the South and East China Seas” was clearly written with China in mind. So too was their pledge to “champion the free, open, and inclusive rules-based order, rooted in international law, that protects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of regional countries.”

China pushed back, nevertheless, with foreign ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian [complaining](#) that “With its so-called democracy having collapsed long ago, the US is forcing other countries to accept the standards of the American democracy, drawing lines with democratic values and piecing together cliques. That is a complete betrayal of democracy.”

In addition, the Quad Senior Cyber Group met in Sydney in early March to discuss cyber security challenges and Quad senior officials (assistant secretaries) held a virtual meeting later that month.

AUKUS Continues Its Progress

The Australia-UK-US (AUKUS) enhanced security partnership continues to move forward. In April, the leaders of the three countries—President Biden, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson—met to assess the initiative. In a [joint statement](#), they reaffirmed their commitment to AUKUS and to a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” region. “In light of Russia’s unprovoked, unjustified, and unlawful invasion of Ukraine, we reiterated our unwavering commitment to an international system that respects human rights, the rule of law, and the peaceful resolution of disputes free from coercion.” In an accompanying [fact sheet](#), they applauded “important steps toward implementation” of Australia’s conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarine capability.

Initially, AUKUS focused on four areas: underwater capabilities, quantum technologies, artificial intelligence, and advanced cyber. But the leaders charged that the need for cooperation “has only grown” since the deal was first agreed, and they have expanded into four new areas: hypersonic and counter-hypersonic capabilities, electronic warfare, innovation and information sharing.



Figure 5 US President Joe Biden speaks with Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on September 15, 2021. Photo: Reuters

After their meeting, the leaders said they were “pleased with the progress” they had made and suggested that other countries might be able to join. “As our work progresses on these and other critical defense and security capabilities, we will seek opportunities to engage allies and close partners,” the fact sheet [said](#). That was especially welcome news in Tokyo, where Chief Cabinet Secretary Matsuno Hirokazu [said](#) that Tokyo will “continue to strengthen cooperation in various ways” with the three “important security and defense partners.” He added that “in the wake of Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, the Indo-Pacific region is in need of further strengthening security cooperation among allies and like-minded countries, and Japan commends (the AUKUS announcement) as a timely response.” The conservative *Sankei Shinbun* newspaper reported that the members had informally asked Japan about joining, a rumor that was quickly [shot down](#) by both Japanese and US officials. White House spokesperson Jen Psaki flatly dismissed the report as “inaccurate.” She explained that “Our focus has been on finalizing a trilateral program of work on a range of advanced military capabilities that align our priorities, amplify our collective strengths and accelerate the development and acquisition of leading-edge defense capabilities.” “It is not a ‘JAUKUS’ plan,” she added.

The Road Ahead

As we enter the second trimester of 2022, the unknowns outweigh the knowns. Is economic recovery around the corner or does another COVID-19 outbreak lurk instead? When will the war in Ukraine end and how? Are we drifting (or rushing) into a new bipolar confrontation with

Russia and China pitted against the West and much of Asia struggling to remain on the sidelines? We'll be watching Biden's trip to Japan and South Korea, actions by and reactions to the new administration in Seoul, and the outcome and subsequent impact of the Australian national election, to name just three triggering events. There are certain to be many more.

REGIONAL CHRONOLOGY

JANUARY—APRIL 2022

Jan. 1, 2022: Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement [enters](#) into force.

Jan. 2, 2022: Vietnam [urges](#) China to urgently reopen border gates as trade stalls.

Jan. 3, 2022: Taiwan announces launch of All-Out Defense Mobilization Agency to boost capabilities of Taiwan's reservists.

Jan. 3, 2022: Indian Minister of External Affairs Dr. S Jaishankar [meets](#) US Secretary of State Antony Blinken to discuss bilateral issues, the Indo-Pacific region, and other global matters.

Jan. 3, 2022: Okinawa's governor [criticizes](#) US military over spread of Omicron variant of COVID-19.

Jan. 5, 2022: North Korea [fires](#) suspected ballistic missile into the sea off its east coast, in its first such launch since October.

Jan. 5, 2022: Australia and Japan [sign](#) a treaty to beef up defense and security cooperation at a virtual summit.

Jan. 5, 2022: US Navy [joins](#) India, Australia, Canada, Republic of Korea, and Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force to begin multinational exercise *Sea Dragon 22*.

Jan. 9-10, 2022: Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi [visits](#) Sri Lanka as the island nation searches for funds to rebuild foreign exchange reserves and repay debt amid ballooning import bills.

Jan. 9, 2022: US [agrees](#) to impose stricter COVID-19 measures at US military bases in Japan.

Jan. 10, 2022: Aung San Suu Kyi [faces](#) six years in jail after new sentences from a Myanmar court.

Jan. 10, 2022: Secretary of State Blinken [says](#) China's sanctions in December on four US Commission on International Religious Freedom commissioners "constitute yet another PRC affront against universal rights."

Jan. 11, 2022: North Korea [fires](#) a suspected ballistic missile toward the East Sea, less than a week after it launched what it claimed to be a hypersonic missile.

Jan. 11, 2022: Supreme Court of South Korea [dismisses](#) second appeal filed by Japan's Mitsubishi Heavy Industries against the forced sale of two of its patents to compensate forced labor victims.

Jan. 11, 2022: Taiwan [suspends](#) F-16 training missions after jet crashes into the sea.

Jan. 12, 2022: China [orders](#) the suspension of six more US flights in the coming weeks after a surge in passengers testing positive for COVID-19.

Jan. 12, 2022: Cambodia [postpones](#) meeting of ASEAN foreign ministers scheduled for next week because some ministers expressed "difficulties" in attending.

Jan. 13, 2022: Japan [donates](#) approximately 2.72 million COVID-19 vaccine doses to Indonesia.

Jan. 13, 2022: Inter-governmental Mekong River Commission (MRC) [urges](#) China and mainland Southeast Asian countries to better coordinate management of Mekong hydropower dams and reservoirs.

Jan. 13, 2022: After nearly two years of border closures to protect North Korea against the pandemic, some humanitarian aid [trickles](#) into the country.

Jan. 14, 2022: Myanmar's ousted former leader Aung San Suu Kyi and deposed President Win Myint [face](#) five additional charges of corruption, each carrying a maximum of 15 years in prison.

Jan. 14, 2022: North Korea [fires](#) two suspected ballistic missiles eastward, South Korea's military said, after Pyongyang publicly warned earlier in the day of a "stronger and certain" response to the United States' imposition of new sanctions.

Jan. 15, 2022: Singapore's prime minister [says](#) ASEAN should continue excluding Myanmar's junta from its meetings until it cooperates on an agreed peace plans.

Jan. 17, 2022: US Special Envoy for North Korea Sung Kim, South Korea's Special Representative for Korean Peninsula Peace and Security Affairs Noh Kyu-duk, and Director-General of the Japanese Foreign Ministry's Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau Funakoshi Takehiro [hold](#) phone talks to discuss North Korea's missile launch.

Jan. 17, 2022: UN envoy [calls](#) on Thailand's support to prevent a deterioration in the crisis in neighboring Myanmar and welcome assurances that refugees fleeing military operations will be protected by the Thai government.

Jan. 18 – 20, 2022: Russia, China, and Iran [hold](#) second joint naval exercises in the Gulf of Oman. They practice sea-lane protection, anti-pirate, and hostage-rescue operations.

Jan. 20, 2022: Vietnam's foreign ministry officials [reject](#) reports from Chinese media that Vietnam has been supporting and arming militia fishing vessels in the maritime dispute.

Jan. 20, 2022: China and Russia [delay](#) a US effort at the United Nations to impose sanctions on five North Koreans in response to recent missile launches by Pyongyang.

Jan. 21, 2022: State Department [imposes](#) sanctions on three Chinese entities for engaging in missile-technology proliferation activities.

Jan. 21, 2022: US Transportation Department [issues](#) order to suspend 44 China-bound flights from the US by four Chinese carriers in response to the Chinese government's decision to suspend some US carrier flights over COVID-19 concerns.

Jan. 23, 2022: Taiwan [reports](#) largest incursion since October by China's air force into its air defense zone.

Jan. 24, 2022: Two US aircraft carrier groups [enter](#) South China Sea for training as Taiwan reported a Chinese air force incursion at the top of the waterway including a new electronic warfare jet.

Jan. 25, 2022: White House [announces](#) the Forced Labor Enforcement Task Force, chaired by the Department of Homeland Security, will work to implement the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act and prohibit the importation of goods made by forced labor from China.

Jan. 25, 2022: North Korea [fires](#) two suspected cruise missiles from an inland area, its fifth such test this year.

Jan. 26, 2022: In an anti-dumping dispute that dates back to 2012, the World Trade Organization [rules](#) in China's favor, permitting it to slap duties on \$645 million worth of US imports per year.

Jan. 26, 2022: Secretary Blinken [holds](#) call with China's State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi to discuss the Russia-Ukraine situation, health security and climate change. The MFA [readout](#) says Wang called on the US to "stop interfering with the Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022, stop playing with fire on the Taiwan issue, and stop creating various anti-China 'small cliques.'"

Jan. 26, 2022: US Navy [makes](#) arrangements to recover F-35C fighter jet that fell into the South China Sea after the pilot attempted a landing on the *USS Carl Vinson* aircraft carrier.

Jan. 27, 2022: North Korea [sets off](#) another volley of suspected short-range ballistic or tactical guided missiles.

Jan. 27, 2022: US announces it will join the UK, the EU, Australia, and Taiwan at the WTO to challenge China's trade curbs on Lithuania.

Jan. 27, 2022: Prime Minister Narendra Modi [hosts](#) first India-Central Asia Summit in a virtual format.

Jan. 28, 2022: China [agreed](#) to allow UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR) Michelle Bachelet to visit Xinjiang in the first half of 2022 after the Beijing Winter Olympic Games.

Jan. 28, 2022: China's ambassador to US [warns](#) of conflict over Taiwan.

Jan. 29, 2022: United States customs agency has [banned](#) imports from Malaysian disposable glove maker YTY Industry Holdings (YTY Group) over suspected forced labor practices.

Jan. 30, 2022: Taiwan Vice President William Lai [concludes](#) visit to the United States and Honduras with a virtual meeting with US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

Jan. 30, 2022: Chinese Foreign Ministry “[lodges](#) solemn representation” with the US over meetings between Taiwan’s Vice President Lai and several US officials, including Vice President Kamala Harris in Honduras and a virtual meeting with House Speaker Pelosi.

Jan. 30, 2022: North Korea [fires](#) ballistic missile toward the East Sea said South Korea’s military. It conducted four other launches earlier this month, including those of what it claimed to be hypersonic missiles.

Jan. 31, 2022: United States, Britain, and Canada [impose](#) sanctions against additional officials in Myanmar.

Feb. 1, 2022: RCEP [takes](#) effect for South Korea. This 15-member free trade agreement is the first to have both South Korea and Japan as members.

Feb. 1, 2022: Japan’s Parliament [adopts](#) resolution on the “serious human rights situation” in China and calls on Prime Minister Kishida Fumio’s government to take steps to relieve the situation.

Feb. 2, 2022: US House of Representatives [advances](#) a multibillion-dollar bill aimed at increasing US competitiveness with China and boosting US semiconductor manufacturing.

Feb. 4, 2022: Russia [agrees](#) to a 30-year contract to supply gas to China via a new pipeline and will settle the new gas sales in euros.

Feb. 4, 2022: United States [asks](#) Japan if it could divert some LNG to Europe if the Ukraine crisis leads to a disruption of supplies.

Feb. 6, 2022: Singapore President Halimah Yacob [meets](#) China’s President Xi Jinping in Beijing and congratulates him on the successful hosting of the Olympic Winter Games.

Feb. 7, 2022: State Department [approves](#) a possible arms sale to Taiwan of equipment and services to support the Patriot Air Defense System for an estimated cost of \$100 million.

Feb. 8, 2022: Taiwan says that it will [relax](#) a ban on Japanese food imports put in place following the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster.

Feb. 8, 2022: CSIS reports that North Korea [harbors](#) an undisclosed missile base built specifically for a unit equipped with intermediate-range and potentially intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs).

Feb. 8, 2022: Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) [announces](#) that it has conducted a four-day exercise with the US Navy in the East China Sea to boost joint deterrence capabilities.

Feb. 9, 2022: Japan [offers](#) Europe part of its liquefied natural gas imports over fears supplies will be disrupted following a possible Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Feb. 9, 2022: China [suspends](#) imports of beef from Lithuania. No reason is provided, but the move is the latest in a series of retaliatory measures Beijing has taken against the Baltic state since it allowed a de facto Taiwan embassy to open in its capital.

Feb. 10, 2022: Taiwan’s foreign ministry [expresses](#) support for US Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) and says it will continue to exchange views with Washington on it.

Feb. 11, 2022: Hong Kong [extends](#) a ban on incoming flights from eight countries, including the United States and Britain, and imposed one on Nepal until March 4.

Feb. 11, 2022: President Joe Biden [nominates](#) Philip Goldberg a senior member of the foreign service, as ambassador to South Korea.

Feb. 11, 2022: White House [releases](#) its Indo-Pacific Strategy, which notes the challenges that China poses for the United States.

Feb. 11, 2022: Secretary of State Blinken and foreign ministers of Japan, Australia, and India [release](#) a joint statement on their fight against COVID-19 and their cooperation “to address regional challenges, including humanitarian assistance and disaster response (HADR), maritime security, counter-terrorism, countering disinformation, and cyber security” as part of the Quad Foreign Ministers meeting.

Feb. 11, 2022: Indonesia [urges](#) G20 to establish a global body that can dispense emergency funds during a health crisis.

Feb. 12, 2022: South Korean Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong and Japanese Foreign Minister Hayashi [hold](#) bilateral talks in Hawaii to discuss North Korea, shared history, and other bilateral issues.

Feb. 13, 2022: Secretary of State Blinken and foreign ministers of South Korea and Japan, meeting in Honolulu to discuss North Korea and issues between Japan and South Korea, [present](#) a unified front against Pyongyang's recent missile tests.

Feb. 16, 2022: Vietnam [announces](#) that it will lift most restrictions on international tourists arriving in the country beginning March 15.

Feb. 17, 2022: New Zealand [says](#) it will not allow Myanmar into RCEP.

Feb. 18, 2022: Russia and China [alter](#) communique being drafted by the G20 to remove a reference to "current" geopolitical tensions clouding the global economic outlook.

Feb. 19, 2022: Philippines [follows](#) New Zealand's decision to reject inclusion of Myanmar in RCEP.

Feb. 20, 2022: Australia [brands](#) a Chinese navy vessel pointing a laser at one of his nation's surveillance aircraft off the northern coast an "act of intimidation."

Feb. 21, 2022: China's foreign ministry [denies](#) a US report that a spent rocket booster forecast to crash on the far side of the moon next month was debris from a Chinese lunar mission in 2014.

Feb. 21, 2022: China [imposes](#) sanctions on US defense firms Raytheon Technology Corporation and Lockheed Martin Corporation in response to their arms sales to Taiwan.

Feb. 22, 2022: India [asks](#) for restraint and greater diplomatic effort to prevent military escalation in Ukraine as it prepares to evacuate its citizens.

Feb. 23, 2022: South Korea [test-fires](#) a long-range surface-to-air missile.

Feb. 23, 2022: China's foreign ministry [asserts](#) that Taiwan is "not Ukraine" and has always been an inalienable part of China.

Feb. 23, 2022: Vladimir Putin [declares](#) "special military operation," launches invasion of Ukraine.

Feb. 24, 2022: President Biden [speaks](#) with Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar about the crisis in Ukraine and the importance of a strong collective response to Russian aggression.

Feb. 24, 2022: Indian Prime Minister Modi [participates](#) in a call with Russian President Putin, and the prime minister urges an end to the violence in Ukraine.

Feb. 24, 2022: Taiwan's air force [scrambles](#) to warn away nine Chinese aircraft that entered its air defense zone on the same day that Russia invaded Ukraine.

Feb. 25, 2022: United Nations Security Council [fails](#) to adopt a draft resolution, submitted by the United States and Albania, intended to end Russia's military offensive against Ukraine

Feb. 25, 2022: Japan [strengthens](#) sanctions against Russia to include financial institutions and military equipment exports.

Feb. 25, 2022: Based on Biden administration leaks, *The New York Times* [reports](#) that the US shared intelligence with China on Russia's troop buildup around Ukraine over a three-month period and urged Beijing to tell Putin not to invade. The Chinese dismissed the intelligence and allegedly shared it with Moscow.

Feb. 26, 2022: Modi [participates](#) in a call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to discuss the situation in Ukraine.

Feb. 26, 2022: US warship [sails](#) through the strait separating Taiwan and China.

Feb. 27, 2022: North Korea [fires](#) an unidentified projectile, says South Korea's military.

Feb. 27, 2022: Former Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzo suggests the US renounce “strategic ambiguity” toward a cross-Strait conflict, saying in unusually direct language that a Taiwan contingency is a Japan contingency.

Feb. 27, 2022: South Korea and Japan [say](#) that North Korea fired a ballistic missile.

Feb. 28, 2022: South Korea and Singapore [unveil](#) sanctions against Russia for invading Ukraine, rare pushback against Moscow in a region that largely avoided taking sides in the conflict.

March 1, 2022: USTR [releases](#) its 2021 Annual Report and its Fiscal Year 2022-2026 Strategic Plan, in which one of its objectives is to “pursue strengthened enforcement to ensure that China lives up to its existing trade obligations.”

March 1, 2022: A delegation of former senior US defense and security officials sent by President Joe Biden [arrive](#) in Taipei.

March 2, 2022: Modi [participates](#) in a call with Putin to review the situation in Ukraine and emphasize India’s need to evacuate its citizens from Kharkiv amid an assault by Russian forces.

March 2, 2022: Cambodia [rejects](#) the use or threats of force and does not side with any of the parties in the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

March 3, 2022: Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank [announces](#) that it has put all activities relating to Russia and Belarus on hold and under review in the wake of the conflict in Ukraine.

March 3, 2022: Top diplomats of Southeast Asian nations [call](#) for an “immediate cease-fire” or “armistice” between Russia and Ukraine, urging continuation of dialogue between the two warring parties.

March 4, 2022: North Korea appears to continue producing fissile materials for nuclear weapons at its main Yongbyon nuclear facility, [says](#) a US monitoring website, citing recent satellite imagery of Yongbyon.

March 5, 2022: North Korea [says](#) it has conducted “another important” test for reconnaissance satellite systems.

March 6, 2022: Over 100 Rohingya refugees from Myanmar [arrive](#) by boat on the shores of Indonesia's Aceh province.

March 7, 2022: China's foreign minister [announces](#) that it is a “naked double standard” to seek to conflate the issues of Taiwan and Ukraine, claiming the island has always been part of China.

March 7, 2022: Analysts [say](#) recent photos taken from space show new buildings and other signs of work at North Korea’s nuclear testing facility.

March 7, 2022: Three-day 23rd Executive Steering Group Meeting [begins](#) in New Delhi between the Indian and US Navies. The meeting discusses bolstering defense relations

March 8, 2022: Vietnam lodges a complaint and urges China to [respect](#) its exclusive economic zone and sovereignty after China had earlier announced military drills in the vicinity of China’s Hainan Islands in South China Sea from March 4-15.

March 8, 2022: South Korea's military [seizes](#) a North Korean boat that crossed into its waters and fires a warning shot to see off a North Korean patrol vessel that tries to intervene.

March 9, 2022: [Summitry](#) between President Biden and ASEAN leaders to be held later this month is postponed.

March 10, 2022: Philippine Ambassador to the US Jose Manuel Romualdez [says](#) Manila is ready to assist Washington should the war between Russia and Ukraine reach Asia.

March 10, 2022: Conservative candidate Yoon Seok-yul narrowly [wins](#) the South Korean presidential election.

March 10, 2022: Members of US Congressional Hispanic Caucus [urge](#) President Biden to champion vaccine collaboration with India to end the COVID-19 pandemic

March 11, 2022: India [claims](#) that it has accidentally fired a missile into Pakistan because of a “technical malfunction” during routine maintenance.

March 11, 2022: North Korea [appears](#) to be working to restore underground tunnels of its purportedly demolished Punggye-ri nuclear test site.

March 11, 2022: Prime Minister Kishida and President-elect Yoon [speak](#) on the phone for the first time since Yoon's victory. They agreed on the importance of improving ties and resolving pending issues. Kishida is the second leader to speak with Yoon, after President Joe Biden.

March 12, 2022: Vietnam [bans](#) Sony's action movie *Uncharted* from domestic distribution over a scene featuring a map that shows a disputed line declared by China to stake its claim to large parts of the South China Sea.

March 13, 2022: Australia [reports](#) that it has stopped an "incursion" by Beijing into the Pacific islands by talking with leaders there weekly and offering vaccine aid.

March 14, 2022: US [tells](#) allies in NATO and several Asian countries that China has signaled willingness to provide military and economic aid to Russia, at Moscow's request, to support its war in Ukraine.

March 14, 2022: National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan [meets](#) Chinese Communist Party Politburo Member and Director of the Office of the Foreign Affairs Commission Yang Jiechi in Rome and discusses issues in US-China relations, Russia's war against Ukraine, and the "importance of maintaining open lines of communication between the United States and China."

March 15, 2022: *USS Abraham Lincoln* aircraft carrier [leads](#) military exercises in the Yellow Sea, and air defense artillery at Osan air base intensified drills.

March 16, 2022: North Korea [fires](#) an apparent ballistic missile, but the launch ended in failure, says South Korea's military.

March 17, 2022: South Korean automaker Hyundai Motor [opens](#) Indonesia factory, where the company plans to roll out electric vehicles.

March 19, 2022: PLA spokesperson [says](#) the USS *Ralph Johnson*'s sail-through of the Taiwan Strait on March 17 is a "provocative" act by the US and sends the wrong signals to pro-Taiwan independence forces.

March 20, 2022: North Korea [fires](#) four suspected projectiles from its multiple rocket launchers into the Yellow Sea, says South Korean military officials.

March 20, 2022: Japan [pledges](#) to offer Cambodia about \$428 million in aid and 1.3 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines through the COVAX global vaccine-sharing program.

March 21, 2022: Southeast Asian peace envoy [meets](#) Myanmar's military rulers on his first trip to the crisis-hit country.

March 24, 2022: South Korean and Japanese authorities say that North Korea has [conducted](#) what is likely its largest-ever intercontinental ballistic missile launch.

March 24, 2022: North Korea [fires](#) an apparent long-range ballistic missile toward the East Sea, says South Korea's military.

March 25, 2022: North Korea [says](#) that it successfully test-fired a new ICBM, the *Hwasong-17*, the previous day on the direct order of leader Kim Jong Un. US and South Korean intelligence later [say](#) the ICBM launched by North Korea was actually a *Hwasong-15* missile disguised to look like the newer, larger *Hwasong-17*, according to South Korean military sources.

March 25, 2022: Solomon Islands [confirms](#) it is drafting a security deal with China.

March 26, 2022: Beijing [announces](#) it will host the third regional meeting between foreign ministers of neighboring countries of Afghanistan at the end of the month.

March 27, 2022: India and Maldives [sign](#) a memorandum of understanding to upgrade police infrastructure in archipelago.

March 28, 2022: Classified versions of US *National Defense Strategy*, [Nuclear Posture Review](#), and *Missile Defense Review* are [released](#). The 2022 National Defense Strategy identifies China as the "most consequential strategic competitor and the pacing challenge for the Department."

March 28, 2022: Kim Jong Un [says](#) North Korea will continue to develop “formidable striking capabilities” that cannot be bartered or sold for anything.

March 29, 2022: Biden [meets](#) Singapore PM Lee Hsien Loong to discuss Asian relations.

March 30, 2022: US Securities and Exchange Commission [places](#) 11 Chinese entities on its provisional or conclusive list of issuers under the Holding Foreign Companies Accountable Act.

March 30, 2022: Secretary Blinken [meets](#) Indian FM Jaishankar to discuss bilateral cooperation to address the humanitarian situation in Ukraine, shared efforts in the Indo-Pacific, and the global economy.

March 31, 2022: In response to US visa restrictions on Chinese officials who are believed to have violated human rights, China [imposes](#) reciprocal visa restrictions on US officials “who concocted lies about China’s human rights issues, pushed for sanctions against China and undermined China’s interests.”

March 31, 2022: State Department [releases](#) the 2022 Hong Kong Policy Act Report, which documents actions by leaders in Hong Kong and China from March 2021 through March 2022 that have further eroded both democratic institutions and human rights.

April 1, 2022: Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov [says](#) ties with India are one of the key priorities of Russia and that the country appreciated New Delhi's neutral stand on Ukraine.

April 1, 2022: EU leaders [call](#) on China to help end Russia’s war in Ukraine.

April 1, 2022: Japan [provides](#) emergency grant aid for humanitarian assistance to populations affected by the coup in Myanmar.

April 1, 2022: Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov [visits](#) India from March 31-April 1, 2022 and meets with FM Jaishankar. Lavrov expresses appreciation for India’s neutral stand on Ukraine.

April 1, 2022: Department of Defense [releases](#) its annual Freedom of Navigation Report for Fiscal Year 2021, which lists excessive maritime claims by 26 claimants, including China.

April 2, 2022: China [proposes](#) revising confidentiality rules involving offshore listings, removing a legal hurdle to China-US cooperation on audit oversight while putting the onus on Chinese companies to protect state secrets.

April 4, 2022: Bucha massacre [is](#) first reported.

April 4, 2022: China [extends](#) lockdown in Shanghai after surge in COVID infections.

April 5, 2022: Department of State notifies Congress that it has agreed to [sell](#) Taiwan equipment, training, and other services totaling \$95 million to support the island’s Patriot Air Defense System.

April 5, 2022: AUKUS leaders [release](#) a statement reaffirming their commitment to the initiative and to a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” region. They also [agree](#) to cooperate on hypersonic weapons and electronic warfare capabilities.

April 5, 2022: China [warns](#) Philippines to avoid “improper measures” for stability in South China Sea.

April 6, 2022: South Korea's president-elect [says](#) he wants nuclear bombers and submarines to return to the Korean Peninsula.

April 6, 2022: US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi [plans](#) to visit Taiwan on April 10, according to Japanese sources; the trip is [postponed](#) when she tests positive for COVID-19.

April 7, 2022: China [warns](#) that it will take strong measures if Speaker Pelosi visits Taiwan. The trip is called off when Pelosi tests positive for COVID-19.

April 8, 2022: Peng Ming-min, a Taiwanese democracy activist and the DPP candidate for president in Taiwan’s first freely contested popular election in 1996, [dies](#).

April 9, 2022: White House Press Secretary Psaki [says](#) that President Biden believes that the US-India partnership is the most important relationship the US has in the world.

April 10, 2022: China's foreign ministry [expresses](#) “strong dissatisfaction” with the United States after it raised concerns over Beijing's coronavirus control measures

April 11, 2022: US secretaries of state and defense and India's external affairs and defense ministers [take part](#) in 2+2 meeting, affirming their “common strategic interests” and “abiding commitment to the rules-based international order.”

April 11, 2022: President Biden [meets](#) virtually with Modi to discuss deepening ties between both governments, economies, and people.

April 11, 2022: State Department [announces](#) that the US and India have “agreed to launch new supply chain-cooperation measures” to “more swiftly support each other's priority defense requirements.” It also [announces](#) that the two countries have signed a Space Situational Awareness arrangement.

April 12, 2022: US aircraft carrier [deploys](#) off Korean Peninsula amid tensions following North Korean missile launches.

April 12, 2022: Quad countries [hold](#) handover ceremony for COVID-19 vaccine donation to Cambodia.

April 13, 2022: Australia's international development minister [asks](#) Solomon Islands not to sign China security pact.

April 14, 2022: Russian submarines in the Sea of Japan, also known as East Sea, [fired](#) cruise missiles during exercises.

April 14-15, 2022: Sen. Lindsey Graham [leads](#) congressional delegation to Taiwan during which they discuss US-Taiwan relations, regional security, and other issues of mutual interest with senior Taiwan leaders.

April 15, 2022: South Korean government officially [approves](#) plan to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership

April 16, 2022: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un [observes](#) the test firing of a new type of tactical guided weapon aimed at boosting the country's nuclear capabilities.

April 18, 2022: US envoy [vows](#) “strongest possible deterrent” over North Korea weapons tests.

April 19, 2022: US [shows](#) concerns after China says it signs security pact with Solomon Islands.

April 20, 2022: US and partner countries [walk out](#) of a G20 plenary session when Russia's delegates speak.

April 21, 2022: Quad representatives [hold](#) handover ceremony for COVID-19 vaccine donation to Thailand.

April 21, 2022: South Korea successfully [test-fires](#) two submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) consecutively earlier this week, in a sign the missile is nearing operational deployment.

April 21, 2022: Chinese President Xi [proposes](#) a “global security initiative” that upholds the principle of “indivisible security,” though he gives no details on how it will be implemented.

April 22, 2022: Indian and UK prime ministers [issue](#) a joint statement expressing “in strongest terms their concern about the ongoing conflict and humanitarian situation in Ukraine.”

April 22, 2022: Biden administration “Indo-Pacific czar” Kurt Campbell [visits](#) Solomon Islands after it signs a security pact with China.

April 23, 2022: Guided-missile destroyer *USS Momsen* [arrives](#) in Goa, India, for a scheduled port visit. The *Momsen* is deployed to the US 7th Fleet in support of security and stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

April 23, 2022: Japan's foreign minister [promises](#) his country will bolster its military to help the United States maintain regional security.

April 24, 2022: South Korea's President-elect Yoon says he would “positively [review](#)” joining the Quad.

April 24, 2022: Australia's defense minister [accuses](#) China of paying bribes for international deals, but refuses to say whether corruption played a role in Beijing's defense pact with the Solomon Islands.

April 25, 2022: European Union and India [agree](#) to set up a trade and technology council to step up cooperation.

April 26, 2022: US official says Washington [wants](#) to expand security cooperation with Papua New Guinea.

April 27, 2022: USTR [releases](#) the 2022 Special 301 Report on intellectual property protection and enforcement, which places China on its Priority Watch List, indicating that “particular problems exist in that country with respect to IP protection, enforcement, or market access for U.S. persons relying on IP.”

April 27, 2022: Court in military-ruled Myanmar [sentences](#) deposed leader Aung San Suu Kyi to five years in jail after finding her guilty in the first of 11 corruption cases.

April 28, 2022: China and Iran [agree](#) to step up military cooperation in a range of areas including exercises.

April 29, 2022: German Chancellor Olaf Scholz [visits](#) Japan, not China, on his first Asian trip.

Regional chronology by Pacific Forum research intern Owen Ou.

