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NORMATIVE CHALLENGES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE INDO-PACIFIC

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Despite the lingering effects of COVID-19 and another change in leadership in Tokyo, Japan and Southeast Asian states continued to strengthen their functional cooperation. To counter the negative impact of the pandemic, Japan continued to donate vaccines to ASEAN member states. Economically, Japan and ASEAN together with other regional states concluded the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) in January 2022. Militarily, Japan conducted the Indo-Pacific Deployment 2021 (IPD21) from August to November 2021, which has become a regularized defense deployment. Further, Japan had the very first bilateral Foreign and Defense Ministerial Meeting with the Philippines in April 2022. Diplomatically, Japan and ASEAN closely consulted with each other to enhance cooperation for the realization of Japan's "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" (FOIP) vision and ASEAN's "ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific" (AOIP). However, Japan-Southeast Asia relations now face new normative challenges regarding how their approach to liberal values, such as rule of law and democracy/human rights in the Indo-Pacific region because of the prolonged Myanmar political crisis and the 2022 Russo-Ukraine war.

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A(nother) New Japanese Administration and Southeast Asia

The leadership change in Japan did not directly affect Japan-Southeast Asia relations, but it might have a long-term effect because of Kishida's inclination to emphasize the importance of human rights. In September 2021 Prime Minister Suga Yoshihide stepped down, one year after taking over from Abe Shinzo, deciding not to seek re-election for the LDP leadership. While Suga carried out [the Tokyo Olympics/Paralympics](#), which had been postponed because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and he spent too much political capital executing unpopular [counter-COVID-19 measures](#) and engaging in the [political battle](#) over leadership of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). [NHK public polling](#) after the Olympics/Paralympics showed that the approval rate for the Suga administration dropped from 40% in January 2021 to 29% in August 2021 while disapproval rates rose from 41% to 52%. With a Lower House election scheduled for late 2021, Suga chose to resign in September 2021, and Kishida took over the LDP in the same month.

This leadership change initially created some concern in Southeast Asia, given that Japanese prime ministers changed annually prior to the second Abe administration, destabilizing Japanese domestic politics and Japan's diplomacy toward the region Asia. This concern remained even after the Kishida administration conducted a snap Lower House election in October and secured an [absolute majority](#) for the LDP and a near two-thirds majority with the *Komei* party. According to the [2022 Southeast Asian survey](#) conducted by the ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute, Japan remained “the most trusted major power among Southeast Asians” for three consecutive years, yet its percentage dropped from 67.1% in 2021 to 54.2% in 2022. While there were several reasons, such as perceived domestic mismanagement of the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the main reasons was a possibility of [domestic political instability](#).

Japan's diplomacy toward Southeast Asia remained consistent, however. Under the Suga administration, Japan continuously emphasized the importance of the “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” (FOIP) vision. While Suga actively supported the US initiative to institutionalize the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (or “Quad”) between Australia, India, Japan, and the US, he continuously [emphasized](#) the importance of

ASEAN unity and centrality. Kishida also assured, in his [2021](#) and [2022](#) policy speeches, that Japan would make efforts to promote the FOIP through its allies and partners, including ASEAN. [ASEAN unity and centrality](#) also remain important components of Japan's FOIP vision, and its diplomatic rhetoric looks unlikely to change in the near future. Japan's fundamental diplomatic posture toward Southeast Asian states and ASEAN thus remains the same—while its bilateral engagements aim at deepening understanding of each regional state's needs and requests, its multilateral diplomacy attempts to ensure ASEAN's diplomatic importance in East Asia while cultivating common strategic ground with ASEAN.



Figure 1 Former Defense Minister Gen Nakatani speaks to reporters at the Prime Minister's Office after being named special adviser on human rights issues by Fumio Kishida. Photo: Kyodo

The differences between Suga and Kishida in terms of pursuing the FOIP derive from Kishida's emphasis on freedom, democratic values, and human rights, as shown in his appointment of Nakatani Gen, a former defense minister, as a [special adviser on human rights issue](#). As discussed below, Japan's value-oriented diplomacy has gradually taken a more significant role in its FOIP vision. This corresponds to the Biden administration's [Indo-Pacific strategy](#), which considers democratic values an important component of the rules-based international order. The United States and Japan have become more concerned about China's domestic and international behavior, including its development practices that do not consider liberal values like human rights, and political suppression in the Xinjiang region and Hong Kong. However, this diplomatic posture also has a strategic implication for Southeast Asian

states, particularly Myanmar, where human rights violations are evident.

As of April 2022, Kishida has yet to reveal his own strategic initiative in shaping the FOIP vision. However, since the beginning of 2022, Japan and Southeast Asian states have begun to resume in-person diplomacy, and more active diplomacy and new initiatives may emerge in the near future.

Supporting ASEAN Multilateralism

Japan-ASEAN relations remained strong, yet faced two continuous and emerging challenges in ASEAN-led multilateral diplomacy. First, diplomatic interactions in 2021 were still largely conducted online, which limited in-depth discussions and negotiations for furthering ASEAN-Japan cooperation. At high-level exchanges between Japan and Southeast Asian states from April 2021 to January 2022, including ministerial and summit-level meetings, there were only four in-person meetings out of 24 (see chronology). It was only after February 2022 that in-person meetings resumes. Second, there emerged a new challenge in Japan-Mekong cooperation as a result of the 2021 Myanmar coup. Japan has not launched new [development programs toward Myanmar](#) through its Official Development Assistance (ODA) and postponed the Japan-Mekong summit in 2021, which had been annually convened since 2009. The Japan-Mekong [Foreign Ministers meeting](#) and [Economic Ministers meeting](#) were held in August and September 2021, respectively, yet Japan's emphasis was on the importance of ASEAN's [Five-Point Consensus](#) toward the Tatmadaw. Given Japan's diplomatic concerns over the Myanmar situation, the summit is unlikely to be held unless the Tatmadaw resumes the democratic process.

On the other hand, Japan-ASEAN cooperation has been largely conceptualized on the basis of the 2020 [ASEAN-Japan Joint State on Cooperation on the AOIP](#) which defines bilateral cooperation through the realization of the AOIP and its synergy with Japan's FOIP. Japan repeatedly identified ASEAN as a strategic partner to realize its FOIP vision and its respect for ASEAN unity and centrality as well as the principles of the AOIP, particularly inclusivity, openness, transparency, and rules-based order. The four cooperative areas of the AOIP—(1) maritime cooperation, (2) connectivity, (3) UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and (4)

economic and other possible area of cooperation—were the main fields in which Japan and ASEAN facilitated functional cooperation. In 2020, Japan's foreign ministry mapped out 49 cooperative activities, and in 2021, it discussed the development of 24 additional activities, which include the "[Promotion of action against marine plastic litter in Asia and the Pacific \(Counter Measure II\)](#)," "[Asia Kakehashi program](#) in Japan," and "[the Quang Tri Province onshore wind power project](#) in Vietnam."

Furthering Functional Cooperation

The principles and functional cooperation stipulated in the AOIP and the FOIP are highly compatible. Four main areas of cooperation that the AOIP stipulated resonated with the [three pillars](#) of the FOIP, (1) "Promotion and establishment of the rule of law, freedom of navigation, free trade, etc.," (2) "Pursuit of economic prosperity," and (3) "Commitment for peace and stability." With these cooperative fields in the context of the prolonged effect of COVID-19, Japan and Southeast Asian states showed progress, particularly in the areas of counter-COVID-19, socio-economic cooperation, and defense diplomacy.

Counter-COVID-19 Measures and Public Health Institutionalization

Socio-economic struggles caused by the pandemic loomed large in Southeast Asia even as the negative impact of COVID-19 has gradually mitigated because of the increased availability of vaccines. In this context, Japan continuously contributed to the betterment of the Southeast Asian health circumstance through two main means.

First, Japan has provided vaccines, medical equipment, and financial assistance to ASEAN member states. In October 2021, Japan announced at the [24th ASEAN-Japan Summit](#) that it had [donated](#) vaccines and provided financial aid bilaterally and through the COVAX facility to all ASEAN member states (except Singapore), amounting to over 16 million vaccines and approximately \$296.3 million of grant aid, including "[Last One Mile Support](#)" to promptly deliver vaccines to the Philippines. In January 2022, Japan decided to provide [approximately 272 million additional doses](#) of COVID-19 vaccines to Indonesia, and in April, the Quad

cooperated to donate the [approximately 4.65 million India-manufactured vaccines to Cambodia](#), of which Japan contributed 1.3 million in addition to its “Last One Mile Support.”



Figure 2 Participants attend the 24th ASEAN-Japan Summit, held via videoconference on Oct. 27, 2021. Photo: ASEAN

Second, Japan supported human development and the establishment of health institutions in Southeast Asia. Although Vietnam, the 2020 ASEAN Chair, [announced](#) the establishment of the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases (ACPHEED) in November 2020, the center had [yet to be established](#). Despite the delay, Japan has assisted the establishment of ACPHEED since 2020 by providing financial assistance of ¥49.8 million (\$385,000) through the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund. Furthermore, from October 2021, Japan provides [human development assistance of health officers](#) in cooperation with other regional states in the Indo-Pacific, such as the United States, Australia, Canada, and the EU.

Socio-Economic Cooperation

One of the largest economic achievements by Japan and ASEAN member states was signing the [Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership \(RCEP\)](#), which entered into force on Jan. 1, 2022. This ASEAN-led initiative emerged in the context of the existing bilateral free trade agreement between ASEAN and its dialogue partners, including Japan, and the original 16 members of the East Asia Summit began to negotiate in 2012. Although RCEP's trade standard is not as advanced as the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), it is the region-wide trade agreement that establishes the largest free trade area in the Indo-Pacific. The integration of trade rules, such as rule of origin, will potentially facilitate diversification of supply chains, which reduces trade risks among member states. Also, in the

negotiation process Japan, along with other member states, [supported ASEAN centrality](#), which enabled Indonesia to become the chairperson in the chief negotiators' meetings and the ASEAN secretariat be the secretariat for the negotiation.

Japan-ASEAN economic cooperation becomes an imperative component of the FOIP and the AOIP, particularly in ensuring the mitigation of the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and post-pandemic economic recovery. To this end, Japan and ASEAN created the [“ASEAN-Japan Economic Resilience Action Plan”](#) in 2020, which included over 50 projects, such as the conclusion of the RCEP. To further promote this initiative, in September 2021, Japan proposed the [“ASEAN-Japan Priority for Innovative and Sustainable Growth,”](#) whose four priorities are (1) “Steadily implement the ASEAN-Japan Economic Resilience Action Plan,” (2) “Identify priority fields for focusing on innovation and sustainability in three areas: industry, urban areas, and rural areas,” (3) “Review and upgrade the ASEAN-Japan Economic Resilience Action Plan based on these three areas,” and (4) “Further promote public-private partnerships between ASEAN and Japan based on the Dialogue for Innovative Sustainable Growth (DISG) launched [in 2020].” The proposal was welcomed by ASEAN, and the more details will follow.

For the enhancement of connectivity in the Indo-Pacific, there have been a number of initiatives by Japan and ASEAN in the past few years to seek synergy between Japan's “Expanded Partnership for Quality Infrastructure” and the “Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025,” through the [Joint Statement of the 22nd ASEAN-Japan Summit on Connectivity](#) in November 2019, the [Japan-ASEAN Connectivity Initiative](#) in November 2020, the [ASEAN-Japan Transport Partnership \(AJTP\)](#) in March 2021. As such, Japan and ASEAN cooperate in both hard and soft infrastructure development.

Defense Diplomacy: Constant Engagement

Japan has been active in providing defense capacity-building programs to Southeast Asian states. Previously, Japan created the [“Vientiane Vision”](#) in 2016 and the [“Vientiane Vision 2.0”](#) in 2019, through which Japan conducted joint training and exercises, including the Japan-ASEAN Ship Rider Cooperation Program. The COVID-19 pandemic limited in-person cooperative activities, including capacity-

building programs. Nevertheless, Japan and ASEAN member states conducted online training and seminars, such as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) programs with ASEAN in 2020 and underwater UXO (unexploded ordnance) clearance with Vietnam in 2022. Furthermore, as the COVID-19 vaccination became available, several programs began through in-person meetings, including the third Japan-ASEAN Invitation program on HA/DR in 2020, the Air Rescue seminar with Vietnam in 2020, and Japan-Philippines HA/DR Cooperation Project in 2021.

The Indo-Pacific Deployment (IPD) by Japan's Maritime SDF (MSDF) was also conducted in 2021 marking three consecutive years. Prior to the IPD, Japan conducted similar training by deploying DDH183 (*Izumo*) and DD113 (*Sazanami*) in 2017 and through the "Indo-Southeast Asia Deployment 2018," the so-called [ISEAD18](#), to increase its defense visibility in the Indo-Pacific region. In 2021, MSDF conducted [IPD21](#) from August to November by sending DDH184 (*Kaga*), DD101 (*Murasame*), and DD120 (*Shiranui*). During this deployment, the MSDF held joint training and exercises with regional states, such as the Japan-Vietnam friendly exercise, Japan-Philippines joint exercise, and Japan-US-UK-Netherlands-Canada-Singapore joint exercise. This deployment underpins Japanese defense engagement in the Indo-Pacific, particularly Southeast Asia, which is in the central geographical location that connects the Pacific and the Indian Oceans.

One of the most important forms of defense cooperation in 2021-22 was the first Japan-Philippines Foreign and Defense Ministerial Meeting (2+2) in April 2022. Deepening their "strategic partnership," Japan and the Philippines aimed to elevate defense cooperation to the next level. Two visions stand out. First, both states now consider the possibility of creating a [framework](#) that facilitates "reciprocal visits as well as reciprocal provision of supplies and services." This envisions the future conclusion of not only an acquisition and cross-servicing agreement (ACSA) but also the Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA) that Japan signed in January 2022 with Australia, which substantially increases the [effectiveness and efficiency](#) of defense cooperation. Second, both states emphasized the importance of cooperation in the Sulu-Celebes Seas, where the borders of the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia meet. This area has been

underdeveloped and has become a hotbed for international terrorism and transnational crime and has an important sealine connecting Southeast Asia to the Pacific Ocean. Given China's increasing development aid to the Philippines and the Pacific Islands through the Belt and Road Initiative, [China's military presence](#) around the Sulu-Celebes Seas would likely be stronger, and along with its influence in the region. In this connection, Japan and the Philippines emphasized its strategic importance. This point was also discussed in [Japan-Indonesia dialogues](#) although discussion with Malaysia was not as frequent.



Figure 3 Senior official from Japan and the Philippines gather for the first Japan-Philippines Foreign and Defense Ministerial Meeting ("2+2") meeting on April 9, 2022. Photo: AFP

The Russo-Ukraine War: Normative Implications in the Indo-Pacific

The most significant challenge for the FOIP and the AOIP in 2021-22 is the Russian invasion of Ukraine. On Feb. 24, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced a "[special military operation](#)" against Ukraine. Against initial [expectations](#), Russia's invasion was not smoothly conducted, resulting in a prolonged war with Ukraine. While the UN Security Council has been deadlocked by Russia's veto, the UN General Assembly conducted two important votes through April 2022: [one resolution](#) in March called for ending the Russian offensive and the [other](#) in April suspended Russia from the Human Rights Council. Given that Russian behavior was a clear violation of Ukraine's territorial sovereignty, the general reaction of the international community was strong condemnation against Russia. Nevertheless, while Japan took an explicit stance and voted for both resolutions, ASEAN member states' did not. On the March resolution, Laos and Vietnam abstained while other members

voted for the resolution. On the April resolution, only Philippines and Myanmar voted in favor (represented by Kyaw Moe Tun, the UN ambassador appointed before the military coup in February 2021 who remains loyal to Myanmar's civilian government). Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand abstained while Laos and Vietnam opposed.

On both occasions, ASEAN also issued foreign ministers' statements. In March 3, ASEAN foreign ministers called for an "immediate ceasefire or armistice and continuation of political dialogue" in the [statement](#), although they avoided condemning Russia directly. In April 8, the ministers [responded](#) to atrocities committed in Bucha, Ukraine, by supporting an independent investigation of the incident. Most Western states, including Japan, concluded that those atrocities were committed by Russia, but other states were wary about reaching that conclusion without an independent investigation. As ASEAN operates under consensus decision-making procedures and Vietnam and Laos clearly wanted to avoid naming-and-shaming Russia, ASEAN's approach toward the Russo-Ukraine war remains soft compared to Japan's. Also, this posture reflected ASEAN's preference to open channels of communication while not taking strong measures against aggressors.

Japan has been wary about ASEAN's strategic posture. The one major reason is the potential erosion of international rules and norms, as well as its strategic implications for the Indo-Pacific region. For Japan, Russian aggression is a clear violation of international law and should be punished collectively. Peaceful dialogue to settle the dispute is important, but Japan does not consider it the only means to respond to the Russo-Ukraine War, because if Russia were successful in Ukraine, rules and norms will substantially weaken and certain states in the Indo-Pacific region would be eager to emulate such actions. These include China and North Korea, albeit to different degrees. Therefore, Prime Minister Kishida made [official trips](#) to Indonesia, Vietnam, and Thailand in April and May 2022 to reiterate the importance of international rules and norms and coordinate policies vis-à-vis Ukraine where possible.



Figure 4 Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Indonesian President Joko Widodo wave to reporters ahead of their talks on April 29, 2022, at the presidential palace in Bogor, south of Jakarta. Photo: Kyodo

This challenge to the rules-based international order is not all that Japan's FOIP and ASEAN's AOIP face. There is the ongoing Myanmar issue, as the military junta has disrespected Myanmar's democratic process and overthrown the democratically elected leadership by negating election results. After the coup, ASEAN quickly reached a Five-Point Consensus in April 2021, but its goals, including immediate cessation of violence, constructive dialogue among all parties, and ASEAN mediation, have yet to be achieved. In December 2021, the Tatmadaw stated that it would hold a [general election](#) in August 2023, but there was a condition that "state stability and peace" be ensured. This did not give clear future prospects for Myanmar's domestic politics because that assessment would be conducted by the Tatmadaw. As the political legitimacy of the Tatmadaw has not been accepted internationally, ASEAN did not invite the junta to its summit in 2021, and Japan has not held a bilateral meeting with the Tatmadaw since February 2021.

These two international issues created visible policy divergences between Japan and Southeast Asian states/ASEAN. On the one hand, Japan moved to emphasize the importance of international and domestic rule of law. As the intensification of violence in both Ukraine and Myanmar would likely erode the principles of its FOIP vision without any actions, Japan needs to match words and deeds. On the other hand, ASEAN faces a dilemma. For Myanmar, ASEAN's resistance to invite the Tatmadaw is regarded as a [short-term appropriate measure](#), and the absence of Myanmar would create disunity within ASEAN. As such, Southeast Asian states' response is confined to diplomatic dialogues that

do not guarantee any immediate success. For Russia, as Vietnam and Laos have strong political and military relationships with Moscow, ASEAN has difficulty in reaching consensus to openly condemn Russia's aggression. Since ASEAN under Cambodia's chairpersonship does not plan to uninvite Russia to the East Asia Summit and the ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting Plus, several external members, such as the United States and Australia, might boycott the meetings, and thus weaken ASEAN's convening power.

As such, Japan's inclination to take stronger measures on the rule of law does not necessarily correspond to ASEAN's responses to these two international and regional events. This could make it difficult to synthesize the principles of the FOIP and the AOIP.

Prospects for Japan-ASEAN relations in 2022-23

While functional cooperation between Japan and Southeast Asian states steadily progresses, their strategic postures toward the existing international order have begun to diverge. This divergence has long existed because their national interests differ. However, the Myanmar coup and the Russo-Ukraine war have made it much clearer. This has significant implications for the Indo-Pacific regional order as intensification of the US-China rivalry in the Indo-Pacific region is caused by not only the shifting balance of military and economic power but also their contestation over what basic rules and norms to nurture. This implicitly puts diplomatic pressure on regional states to reveal their preferences. Japan has already taken a firm stance in promoting existing liberal rules and norms, although its approach is not exactly that of the US and the EU. ASEAN member states, however, have divergent views on this, which could weaken ASEAN unity.

In this context, there are important diplomatic events in 2022-23 for both Japan and ASEAN. By the end of 2022, Japan plans to issue three strategic documents—the National Security Strategy (NSS), National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG), and the Medium-Term Defense Program (MTDP). In 2023, Japan will host the Japan-ASEAN commemorative summit for the 50th anniversary of Japan-ASEAN relations. These occasions will be a great opportunity for both Japan and the ASEAN members to coordinate what regional norms and

rules both can facilitate in the Indo-Pacific region and what policies they can pursue.

CHRONOLOGY OF JAPAN-SOUTHEAST ASIA RELATIONS

MAY 2021—APRIL 2022

May 11, 2021: Japan-Vietnam telephone summit [takes place](#) between Japanese Prime Minister Suga Yoshihide and Vietnamese President Nguyen Xuan Phuc.

May 19, 2021: Japan-Philippines telephone summit [takes place](#) between Suga and Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte.

May 20, 2021: Japan-Brunei Defense Ministers' video teleconference [takes place](#) between Japanese Defense Minister Kishi Nobuo and Bruneian Second Defense Minister Halbi Yussof.

May 25, 2021: Japan-Singapore telephone summit [takes place](#) between Suga and Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong.

May 25, 2021: Japan-Thailand Defense Ministers' video teleconference [takes place](#) between Defense Minister Kishi Nobuo and Prime Minister/Defense Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha.

May 26, 2021: Japan-Brunei Foreign Ministers' phone call [takes place](#) between Japanese Foreign Minister Motegi Toshimitsu and Bruneian Foreign Minister II Erywan Yusof.

June 2, 2021: Japan-Philippines Defense Ministers' video teleconference [takes place](#) between Kishi and Philippine Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana.

June 3, 2021: Japan-Vietnam Defense Ministers' video teleconference [takes place](#) between Kishi and Vietnamese Defense Minister Phan Van Giang.

June 9, 2021: Japan-Brunei Foreign Ministers' phone call [takes place](#) between Motegi and Foreign Minister Erywan.

June 10, 2021: Japan-Indonesia Foreign Ministers' phone call [takes place](#) between Motegi and Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi.

June 18, 2021: Japan's Ministry of Defense [hosts](#) seminar on Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief (HA/DR) for Lao People's Army.

June 23, 2021: Japan-Laos Defense Ministers' video teleconference [takes place](#) between Kishi and Laotian Deputy Prime Minister/Defense Minister Chansamone Chanyalath.

June 25, 2021: Japan-Cambodia Defense Ministers' video teleconference [takes place](#) between Kishi and Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister/Defense Minister Tea Banh.

June 28, 2021: Japan-Indonesia Foreign Ministers' meeting [takes place](#) between Motegi and Foreign Minister Marsudi.

June 29, 2021: Japan and Thailand exchange memorandum regarding COVID-19 vaccine donation to Thailand.

June 29, 2021: Japan-Brunei Foreign Ministers' Meeting [takes place](#) between Motegi and FM Erywan.

July 28, 2021: 11th Meeting of the Japan-Philippines High Level Joint Committee on Infrastructure Development and Economic Cooperation [takes place](#).

Aug. 3, 2021: Japan-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (online) [takes place](#).

Aug. 11, 2021: 5th Japan-Thailand High Level Joint Commission [takes place](#).

Aug. 12, 2021: Japan-Brunei Foreign Ministers' phone call [takes place](#) between Motegi and FM Erywan.

Aug. 20 – Nov. 25, 2021: Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force [conducts](#) Indo-Pacific Deployment 2021 (IPD21) by dispatching JS *Kaga* (DDH 184), JS *Murasame* (DD 101), and JS *Shiranui* (DD 120).

Sept. 3, 2021: 11th Japan-Cambodia Human Rights Dialogue [takes place](#).

Sept. 8, 2021: Japan-Brunei Foreign Ministers' phone call [takes place](#) between Motegi and Foreign Minister Erywan.

Sept. 10, 2021: Meeting between Japan's State Minister for Foreign Affairs Uto Takashi and Indonesian Transportation Minister Budi Karya Sumadi.

Sept. 15, 2021: Japan-Vietnam Summit phone call [takes place](#) between Suga and President Phuc.

Sept. 28, 2021: Japan [sends](#) donations of approximately 100,000 COVID-19 vaccine doses to Brunei.

Sept. 30, 2021: Japan's Ministry of Defense, SDF, and Philippine Air Force [hold](#) first online "Subject Matter Expert Exchange on Aviation Medicine and Aeromedical Evacuation."

Oct. 12, 2021: Japan-Brunei Foreign Ministers' phone call [takes place](#) between Motegi and Foreign Minister Erywan.

October 27, 2021: 24th ASEAN-Japan Summit Meeting [takes place](#) (online).

Nov. 2, 2021: Japan-Vietnam Summit takes place between Prime Minister Kishida Fumio and Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh.

Nov. 15-19, 2021: Japan's Ministry of Defense, SDF, and Philippine Army [conduct](#) HA/DR training through the Japan-Philippine HA/DR Cooperation Project.

Nov. 17, 2021: Japan-Philippines telephone summit [takes place](#) between Kishida and President Duterte.

Nov. 17, 2021: Japan-Thailand Foreign Ministers' phone call [takes place](#) between Foreign Minister Hayashi Masayoshi and Thai Deputy Minister/Foreign Minister Don Pramudwinai.

Nov. 17, 2021: Japan-Brunei Foreign Ministers' phone call [takes place](#) between Hayashi and FM Erywan.

Nov. 18, 2021: Japan-Cambodia Foreign Ministers' phone call [takes place](#) between FM Hayashi and Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Prak Sokhonn.

Nov. 18, 2021: Japan-Indonesia summit phone call [takes place](#) between Kishida and Indonesian President Joko Widodo.

Nov. 22, 2021: Japan-Thailand summit phone call [takes place](#) between Kishida and Thai Prime Minister/ Defense Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha.

Nov. 22, 2021: Japan-Singapore summit phone call [takes place](#) between Kishida and Prime Minister Lee.

Nov. 24, 2021: Japan-Vietnam Summit Meeting [takes place](#) between Kishida and Prime Minister Pham.

Nov. 24, 2021: Japan-Vietnam Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters is [signed](#).

Nov. 25, 2021: Japan-Vietnam Foreign Ministers Meeting [takes place](#) between FM Hayashi and Vietnamese Foreign Minister Bui Thanh Son.

Nov. 30, 2021: Japan Ministry of Defense/SDF [hold](#) online meeting for knowledge/experience sharing about PKO missions with Vietnam.

Dec. 1, 2021: Japan-Singapore Foreign Ministers' phone call [takes place](#) between FM Hayashi and Singaporean Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan.

Dec. 1, 2021: Japan-Cambodia Leaders' video conference [takes place](#) between Kishida and Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen.

Dec. 2, 2021: Japan-Malaysia summit phone call [takes place](#) between Kishida and Malaysian Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob.

Dec. 2, 2021: Japan-Malaysia Foreign Ministers' phone call [takes place](#) between Hayashi Yoshimasa and Malaysian Foreign Minister Saifuddin Abdullah

Dec. 8, 2021: Japan-Philippines Foreign Ministers' phone call [takes place](#) between Hayashi and Philippine Foreign Secretary Theodoro Locsin, Jr.

Dec. 22, 2021: 6th Japan-Cambodia Politico-Military (PM) Dialogue [takes place](#).

Dec. 25, 2021-Jan. 12, 2022: Japan Ministry of Defense/SDF provides training to Vietnam for peacekeeping operations.

Dec. 28, 2021: Japan-Brunei Defense Ministers' video teleconference [takes place](#) between Kishi and Defense Minister Halbi.

Jan. 11, 2022: Japan-Cambodia Foreign Ministers' phone call [takes place](#) between Hayashi and Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Sokhonn.

Jan. 11, 2022: Japan-Laos Foreign Ministers' phone call [takes place](#) between Hayashi and Laotian Foreign Minister Saluexay Kommasith.

Jan.12, 2022: Japan Ministry of Defense, SDF, and Vietnam People's Navy [hold](#) online seminar on Underwater Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) clearance.

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

Jan. 19, 2022: Japan's Ministry of Defense, SDF, and Vietnam Peoples' Navy [hold](#) online seminar on underwater medicine.

Feb. 3-4, 2022: Japan Ministry of Defense [conducts](#) cyber security online seminar for ASEAN member states and the ASEAN Secretariat.

Feb. 14-17, 2022: Japan Ministry of Defense/ASDF [conduct](#) capacity-building activities on air rescue for Vietnam Air Defense-Air Force.

Feb. 14, 2022: Courtesy call on Hayashi by Cambodian Lt. Gen. Hun Manet, commander of the Royal Cambodian Army, [takes place](#).

Feb. 16, 2022: 12th Meeting of the Japan-Philippines High Level Joint Committee on Infrastructure Development and Economic Cooperation [takes place](#).

March 1, 2022: Japan-Laos Summit phone call [takes place](#) between Kishida and Laotian Prime Minister Phankham Viphavanh.

March 3, 2022: Japan-Indonesia Foreign Ministers' phone call [takes place](#) between Japanese FM Hayashi and Indonesian FM Marsudi.

March 8, 2022: Japan-Indonesia summit phone call [takes place](#) between Kishida and President Jokowi.

March 12, 2022: Former Prime Minister Abe Shinzo [meets](#) Malaysian Prime Minister Yaakob.

March 15, 2022: Japan [dispatches](#) personnel to Independent Decommissioning Body in relation to the Mindanao Peace Process in the Philippines.

March 20, 2022: Japan-Cambodia summit meeting [takes place](#) between Kishida and Prime Minister Hun Sen.

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

April 7, 2022: Japan-Philippines Defense Ministers' Meeting [takes place](#) between Kishi and Defense Secretary Lorenzana.

April 9, 2022: 1st Japan-Philippines Foreign and Defense Ministerial Meeting (2+2) [takes place](#) between Hayashi and Kishi and Foreign Secretary Locsin and Defense Secretary Lorenzana.

April 9, 2022: Japan-Philippines Foreign Ministers' Meeting [takes place](#) between Hayashi and Foreign Secretary Locsin.

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

April 19, 2022: 17th Japan-Singapore Military Medicine Dialogue [takes place](#).

April 20, 2022: Japan-Malaysia Summit phone call [takes place](#) between Kishida and Prime Minister Yaakob.

April 21, 2022: Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Matsuno Hirokazu [meets](#) Thai Deputy Minister/Energy Minister Supattanapong Pumeechaow.

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

April 22, 2022: Japan–Singapore Partnership Programme for the 21st Century, JSPP21, [takes place](#) online.

April 23, 2022: Japan–Cambodia Summit [takes place](#) between Kishida and Prime Minister Hun Sen.

April 23, 2022: Japan–Laos Summit [takes place](#) between Kishida and Prime Minister Viphavanh.

April 25, 2022: Hayashi [meets](#) Philippine Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez.

April 29, 2022: Japan–Indonesia Summit [takes place](#) between Kishida and President Jokowi.

