

COMPARATIVE

C O N N E C T I O N S

A TRIANNUAL E-JOURNAL OF BILATERAL
RELATIONS IN THE INDO-PACIFIC

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

THE “YEAR OF ELECTIONS,” TAKE TWO!

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The “Year of Elections” is upon us and, notwithstanding a ripple or two, there have been no upsets. In Taiwan, the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) candidate won with roughly 40% of the vote, given the divided opposition. Incoming President William Lai Ching-te is expected to extend olive branches Beijing’s way when inaugurated on May 20 but the odds of Beijing being receptive are depressingly low. In Pakistan, candidates associated with former Prime Minister Imran Khan won the most seats but not enough to form a new government (or get Khan out of jail). In Indonesia, defense minister and retired army Gen. Prabowo Subianto won as expected, the only (minor) surprise being his first-round majority, avoiding a June runoff (and giving him lots of time to prepare for his October inauguration). In Russia, to no one’s surprise, Vladimir Putin emerged victorious, having neutered (if not murdered) any credible opposition. In South Korea, President Yoon Suk Yeol’s People Power Party failed to unseat the opposition in National Assembly elections, causing many to refer to him as a lame duck, despite three years remaining in his term. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is also expected to emerge victorious with India’s elections still underway.

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President Yoon's tenuous political position and the continued political weakness of Japanese Prime Minister Kishida Fumio (who faces an LDP leadership election this fall), when combined with former US President Donald Trump's ever-looming shadow as US presidential election politics heat up, have added a sense of urgency behind efforts in all three countries to institutionalize their budding trilateral relationship in the wake of last summer's groundbreaking Camp David Summit.

Minilateral cooperation was the order of the day this reporting period, not just among the United States, Korea, and Japan, but involving the US, Japan, and Philippines and the increasingly popular (in some quarters) AUKUS (Australia, US, and United Kingdom) defense and technology-sharing arrangement. Washington's efforts at strengthening its Quad relationship is being met by a new quad, the so-called "axis of upheaval" involving Beijing, Moscow, Pyongyang, and Tehran. Finally, a few words about economics relations. If anyone was expecting major progress in trade policy during a US election year, they clearly have not been paying attention. Nonetheless, the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity is slowly taking substance, but there is a long way to go and, like so many regional developments, any progress could be undone in a Trump presidency.

The "Year of Elections"

As we summarized in our [January report](#), the year of elections is upon us, with national leadership up for grabs (in some cases more than others) in seven of the world's 10 largest countries, all (technically speaking) in the Indo-Pacific region. All told, more than 60 countries representing half the world population—some 4 billion people—will hold regional, legislative, and presidential elections this year.

Taiwan

The people of Taiwan (or at least 40% of voters) selected the ruling DPP candidate, (William) Lai Ching-te over Hou Yu-ih from the Kuomintang (KMT) and Ko Wen-je of the Taiwan People's Party (TPP). A fourth major candidate, independent businessman Terry Gou, founder of the world's largest electronics manufacturer, Foxconn, [dropped out](#) last November after reports that Beijing, which made no secret of its support for the KMT and its dismay over the split opposition, reportedly began an investigation

into Foxconn. Attempts by the KMT and TPP to field a common candidate failed, however, opening the door for the DPP's less-than-majority win.



Figure 1 Taiwan President-elect Lai Ching-te speaks as Incoming Defence Minister Wellington Koo stands next to him during a press conference where incoming cabinet members are announced, in Taipei, Taiwan April 25, 2024. Photo: Carlos Garcia Rawlins

While securing the presidency, the DPP lost its majority in the Legislative Yuan. The TPP, with its eight seats, now gets to play kingmaker over the KMT (52 seats) and DPP (51 seats). The China-Taiwan [chapter](#) provides analysis of the implications of a third straight DPP-run administration. All eyes will now be on Lai's May 20 inauguration address which, if the past is precedent, will include overtures toward Beijing "on the basis of equality." While this will provide Xi Jinping with an opportunity to find a new "2024 consensus," odds are it will be an opportunity the mainland fails to seize.

Pakistan

The Indo-Pacific's biggest [election surprise](#) thus far was the ability of candidates associated with the jailed former prime minister and star cricket player Imran Khan to win the most seats (but not a majority) in Feb. 8 national elections, despite his PTI party (Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf or Pakistan Movement for Justice) having been all but disbanded. While this did not prevent the Army's preferred candidate, former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of the Pakistan Muslim League, from forming a [new government](#), it did demonstrate the limits of authoritarian control as long as some semblance of freedom of choice still exists.

Russia

Regrettably, the same cannot be said in Russia, where President Vladimir Putin, now in command since 2000 (including a 2008–12 stint as prime minister when then-constitutional restrictions prohibited him from a third consecutive term) has once again emerged victorious in March 15–17 elections, after silencing most of his critics, including heroic opposition leader Alexei Navalny, who died in a Siberian prison several weeks before the election. Navalny supporters lodged a silent protest of sorts, when they called on voters to create long lines at polling stations at noon on the last day of voting.

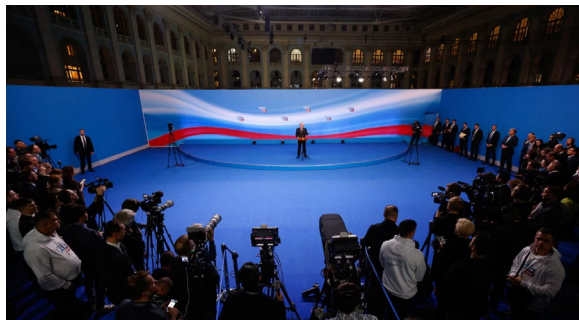


Figure 2 Russian presidential candidate and incumbent President Vladimir Putin speaks after polling stations closed, in Moscow, Russia, March 18. Photo: Maxim Shemetov

Indonesia

Unlike Taiwan, where the presidential candidate with the most votes wins, even with a plurality, in Indonesia the winner must achieve a majority of votes or face a runoff between the two leading contenders. To his credit, Prabowo Subianto of the Great Indonesia Movement or Gerindra Party, managed to secure over 58% of the vote against ruling Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan or PDI-P) candidate Ganjar Pranowo (16%) and independent candidate Anies Rasyid Baswedan (25%), a former minister of Education and Culture under current President Joko Widodo (a.k.a. Jokowi) and subsequent governor of Jakarta.

As a member of the Jokowi administration and with Jokowi's son, Gibran Rakabuming Raka, as his running mate, Prabowo was seen more as a continuation than an alternative to current administration policies and his early pronouncements underscore this belief. Like Jokowi, his first post-election, pre-inauguration overseas trip was to Japan and China,

demonstrating his awareness of the necessity to balance relations with Asia's two largest economies. He did attract media attention, however, when decrying the international "double standard" that has caused the world to rally behind Ukraine while largely ignoring the plight of the Palestinian people in Gaza.

India

National elections are underway in the "world's largest democracy," with voting spread out over seven phases between April 19 until June 1. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is expected to win, even though his rightwing Hindu party has been accused of suppressing democracy. Modi's government has thus far successfully walked the tightrope between improving relations with Washington while restraining itself from being overly critical of its traditional partner (and major arms supplier) Russia, given Washington's view of its Quadrilateral Security Dialogue ("Quad") partner (along with Australia and Japan) as a necessary counterweight to China's growing influence in the Indo-Pacific region.



Figure 3 India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi gestures as he walks on the day he files his nomination papers for the general elections in Varanasi, India May 14, 2024. Photo: Adnan Abidi

Washington's love affair with Modi is being severely tested, however, as more details emerge surrounding a failed assassination attempt against Sikh activist Gurbhag Singh, a US citizen, reportedly undertaken by India's spy agency, the Research and Analysis Wing, last summer. Compounding the problem (and adding credence to the charges) is the recent arrest, in Canada, of three Indian nationals accused of assassinating Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a Canadian citizen and prominent campaigner for a separate Sikh homeland, in British Columbia last June. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau

previously announced that his government had credible information linking the Indian government to the killing.

Japan

Hopes that Japanese Prime Minister Kishida Fumio's successful summit with US President Joe Biden would earn him a second term in office—the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) holds elections in the fall; the winner becomes president of the party and then prime minister of Japan by virtue of the LDP's status as senior member of the ruling coalition—dissipated after April by-elections for three seats in Parliament. In those votes, scattered across the country in Nagasaki, Shimane, and Tokyo prefectures, the opposition Constitutional Democratic Party (CDP) won all by convincing margins. (In two of the three, the LDP didn't bother fielding a candidate.) The shellacking has (temporarily at least) put an end to talk of a snap parliamentary election this summer—a vote must be held by fall 2025—at which a convincing LDP win would consolidate Kishida's hold on power.



Figure 4 Yukio Edano, leader of the new Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan, speaks during a news conference in Tokyo. Photo: AP

In theory, that vulnerability could upend many of the policies that Kishida and the LDP have trumpeted: a more visible regional and global role, closer ties to the United States, increasing efforts to counter China. If the public is less comfortable with Tokyo's activism, worried about the state and trajectory of relations with the US or China, or unhappy about a doubling of the defense budget, a change in leadership could have big implications.

At least in theory. In fact, it isn't clear what the opposition stands for on those big issues or if a

change in the prime minister's office (whether the officeholder is from the LDP or not) would shift positions. Kishida may be at the center of gravity of Japanese national security policy and any future prime minister might continue current trajectories.

This also assumes that Kishida's weakness is a threat to his future. That too isn't clearly the case. While the prime minister, his cabinet, and the LDP aren't popular, that doesn't mean that the public is ready for an alternative. While the opposition did well in the by-elections, there is little indication that it poses a national threat and that the ballots weren't protest votes. Within the party, there is no obvious challenger to Kishida and finding a consensus candidate would require introspection and internal debate for which the LDP looks ill-prepared.

South Korea

Barring impeachment (a rare but not unprecedented event), Yoon Suk Yeol has three years remaining on his five-year term as South Korean president. But the failure of his People Power Party (PPP) to wrest control of the National Assembly from the opposition Democratic Party (DP), which won 175 seats to the PPP's 108 in the 300-seat legislature, will result in "strong headwinds" as he attempts to pursue his domestic and foreign policy agendas.

Yoon is expected to stick to his foreign policy priorities, which include strengthening the US-South Korea alliance and an unyielding stance toward North Korean provocations. Most notably, Yoon appears determined to push forward to improving South Korea's strained relationship with Japan and the building of close trilateral cooperation with Washington and Tokyo. This will no doubt continue to draw political backlash. During the National Assembly campaign, DP leader Lee Jae-myung stated that "This general election is a perfect new Korea-Japan war," adding "There are still too many pro-Japanese remnants in this country that have not been cleared up."

Trilateral Arrangement, Not Alliance

While some enthusiastic supporters now refer to a US-South Korea-Japan "trilateral alliance," purists will continue to call it an arrangement or cooperative agreement or use language of that sort. While formal alliances exist between the United States and South Korea and between the United States and Japan, there is no formal

alliance between South Korea and Japan or formally among the three. It would take a great deal of political courage in all three capitals, and perhaps a constitutional change or at least reinterpretation in Japan, for a formal trilateral alliance to be created. However, if all the Camp David initiatives and agreements can be institutionalized, it will go a long way toward establishing what has previously been dubbed as a “virtual alliance” cementing cooperation among the three like-minded partners who share democratic values and comparable social and legal systems.

To that end, the three partners issued a Joint Statement on the Trilateral United States–Japan–Republic of Korea Indo-Pacific Dialogue on Jan. 6, identifying “a new chapter in our countries’ partnership and an important step forward to strengthen and more closely align our policies globally.” They “reiterated their ongoing commitment to trilateral maritime security and law enforcement cooperation in accordance with international law with a focus on support for capacity building in the region.” In case that was too subtle, the also noted “recent dangerous and escalatory behavior supporting unlawful maritime claims by the PRC in the South China Sea,” while reiterating their “firm commitment to international law, including the freedom of navigation and overflight, as reflected in the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.” Rounding out their agreement, they “opposed any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion anywhere in the waters of the Indo-Pacific,” “condemned the DPRK’s continued development of its unlawful nuclear and ballistic missile programs, growing military cooperation with Russia, and grave human rights violations and abuses”; and “reaffirmed the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait as indispensable to security and prosperity in the international community.”

US–Japan–Philippines: A “New Chapter” Begins

Coverage of the summit between President Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Kishida belongs in the US–Japan [chapter](#). We, however, should comment on the first trilateral meeting among the US, Japanese, and Philippine heads of government that followed. The Joint Vision Statement that they released explained that the three countries are “bound together by historical ties of friendship, robust and growing economic relations, and a proud and resolute commitment to our shared fundamental values of freedom,

democracy, respect for human rights, and the rule of law,” and pledged that they will work together “for decades to come.”

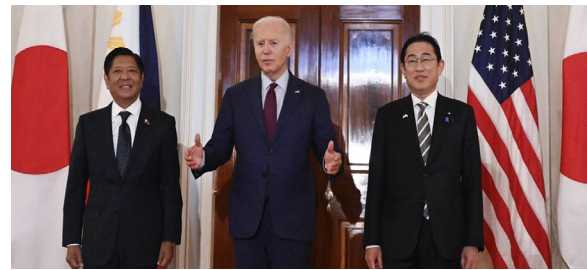


Figure 4 Yukio Edano, leader of the new Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan, speaks during a news conference in Tokyo. Photo: AP

The summit was the culmination of a process set in motion by the June 2023 meeting of the three national security advisors and had been building with joint exercises, consultations at increasingly senior levels, and efforts to forge cooperation across the widest possible range of government activities. It was intended to consolidate a relationship that has become increasingly important as China expands its activities in the South China Sea.

At the summit, the three nations agreed to step up maritime security cooperation, including enhanced maritime domain awareness, as well as to launch a Japan–Philippines–US humanitarian assistance and disaster response exercise, which could be integrated into trilateral or multilateral activities. This is part of a broader effort to “advance trilateral defense cooperation, including through combined naval training and exercises between our three countries and additional partners,” such as Australia.

It is telling that the first items on the list of deliverables from the summit were economic. Topping the agenda was the Luzon Economic Corridor, the first Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment corridor in the Indo-Pacific. This project will support connectivity between Subic Bay, Clark, Manila, and Batangas in the Philippines through “coordinated investments in high-impact infrastructure projects, including rail; ports modernization; clean energy and semiconductor supply chains and deployments; agribusiness; and civilian port upgrades at Subic Bay.”

Second, they will work together on critical and emerging technologies, with the US and Japan

agreeing to provide millions of dollars in aid for Open Radio Access Network (RAN) field trials and the Asia Open RAN Academy based in Manila, which will build “an open, interoperable, secure, reliable, and trusted information communications technology ecosystem in the Philippines.” Third, they agreed to pursue a semiconductor workforce development initiative to help make chip supply chains more resilient. They also said they would “expand trilateral cooperation in the Philippines on the deployment of clean energy technologies, including renewable energy projects...to support energy requirements in the Philippines and help ensure a just energy transition.”

While these declarations are often filled with hyperbole, it's hard to dismiss this statement's claim that a “new trilateral chapter between our three nations begins today.”

AUKUS Advances

The Australia-UK-US (AUKUS) “enhanced strategic partnership” made important progress this reporting period as well. Critical to its success is the loosening of restraints on export controls since tech sharing—whether submarines (pillar one) or advanced and emerging technologies (pillar two)—is the core of the agreement. All three governments introduced legislation to do just that. The Australian bill is [here](#), the UK one [here](#), and the US package [here](#). The Australian bill follows passage of [amendments](#) to its trade control regulations the previous month. The US legislation is also part of a longer process; April amendments to export regs can be found [here](#). One commentator called the US measures a “[once-in-a-generation defence trade reform in support of AUKUS](#),” but it seems fair to extend that assessment to the amendments in each country.



Figure 6 The three AUKUS leaders: Australian PM Anthony Albanese, US President Joe Biden and UK PM Rishi Sunak. Photo: Getty Images

Efforts to turn the AUKUS potential into reality, coupled with the eternal buzz surrounding new and emerging technologies, has other governments considering membership in the group. Prior to Kishida's trip to the US, senior US officials were talking about Japan joining— a prospect long mooted in Tokyo—but what looked to be a sure thing was reportedly batted back by Canberra and London out of concern that it might distract from the primary focus of getting those submarines built and delivered (more on which below). Officials denied that Japan would become a formal member but are ready to work with it on pillar two. (Actually doing so requires Tokyo's progress on information security.) The Republic of Korea was reportedly also interested in joining the effort, both to keep pace with Tokyo and to be on the cutting edge of defense tech development. In addition, New Zealand was said to be eager to join (although subsequent reporting traced that interest back to September 2021.)

The biggest challenges for the optimists are difficulties the US faces in building submarines, not just those for AUKUS. The Navy is building (on average) just more than a single *Virginia*-class submarine each year; AUKUS pushes total demand to 2.33 annually. And delivery of those boats is now about 30 months late on average. That makes somewhat inexplicable the Biden administration decision to cut funding for that submarine class in its new budget.

Still, officials publicly insist they have confidence in the AUKUS project. Australian Defense Industry Minister Pat Conroy said he remains “very confident that we'll be in a position for the *Virginia* class to be sold to Australia on the timeframes articulated.” Others,

such as former Australian defense official Michael Shoebridge, aren't so sure. He noted that the US fleet of attack submarines will fall to 46 from a target of 66 in 2030. "It's going to get harder for a commander of the US submarine force to say, no, I can get by with less submarines, I'm happy to sell three to my Australian friends." He worries that "A US president will come under more pressure to say, I need to look after my own security first."

Axis of Upheaval: For Every Action

Another minilateral arrangement was highlighted this reporting period: "the Axis of Upheaval." That tasty moniker was affixed to the group, consisting of China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea, in thoughtful analysis by Andrea Kendall-Taylor and Richard Fontaine, of CNAS, the Washington-based national security think tank. Attention has focused on the grouping in recent months following recognition that Chinese, North Korean, and Iranian support for Russia's war against Ukraine makes them "critical enablers of Moscow's war machine."



Figure 7 Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov walks with his North Korean counterpart Choe Son Hui, in Moscow, Russia, January 16, 2024. Photo: Maxim Shemetov

In fact, however, their ties go considerably further back, and well predate the declaration of "a friendship without limits" by China's supreme leader Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin on the eve of Moscow's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. While "cooperation among the four countries was expanding before 2022, the war has accelerated their deepening economic, military, political, and technological ties."

This group is bound by collective dissatisfaction with the existing international order, a "shared opposition to the Western-dominated global order, an antagonism rooted in their belief that that system does not accord them the status or freedom of action they deserve." They seek to overturn existing rules, norms, and institutions that check the spread of their influence and power and are willing to court instability to achieve this objective. They cooperate to enhance their respective military capabilities and diplomatic clout, while simultaneously undermining international institutions that might check those efforts as well as the economic power that is the foundation of US global power. They reject universal values, human rights, and international democracy—if it checks the assertion of their national prerogatives. But they argue that all countries are equal insofar as they must have respect for their internal political system.

Trump's Looming Shadow

Let's be honest! There is a growing sense of urgency, especially in Seoul but also in Tokyo and even Washington, behind the need for institutionalization of this trilateral effort. South Korean President Yoon has demonstrated extraordinary political courage in his attempt to build a better relationship between Seoul and Tokyo but he is limited to one term and many are already calling him a "lame duck" given the ruling party's aforementioned setbacks in recent legislative elections. Japanese Prime Minister Kishida has likewise been more forthcoming than many of his predecessors in opening his arms to his South Korean counterpart, but he too is on shaky domestic political grounds, as described above.

Finally, and most significantly, the US elections might (or might not) result in a major change in alliance management tactics and perhaps policy, depending on who wins. We are not foolhardy enough to try and predict what former President Donald Trump's Asia policy might be if he is returned to the Oval Office. (We will, perhaps foolishly, take a stab at this in the next issue, however, once the candidates have officially been nominated and party platforms revealed.) Suffice it to say that candidate Trump is already saying things that are making alliance supporters in Seoul and Tokyo (and Washington, and Europe, and almost everywhere else) very nervous. But, if

the past is a precedent (and it often, but not always, is), then it's useful to distinguish between what then-President Trump said and what the Trump administration did when he was last in office.



Figure 8 Donald Trump speaks in Florida at a rally.
Photo: Gage Skidmore

The former Trump administration's National Security Strategy document, which outlines and guides US policy, was remarkably similar to those that preceded and followed it when it came to the discussion of US alliances. This is because, while political parties and political rhetoric and catchphrases change from administration to administration, US national interests seldom shift dramatically. Trump's negotiating style certainly differed from most others who have held the job, but the role of the US alliance network as the "foundation" of US policy has changed little in the past 75 or more years.

Candidate Trump is not the first presidential aspirant to threaten to remove US forces from Asia. That "honor" goes to Jimmy Carter, who discovered as president that this was easier said than done. Recent Congressional legislation (the National Defense Authorization Act for FY2024) aimed at insuring that no future US president (read: Trump) can unilaterally remove US forces from Europe or Asia without Congressional approval further restricts presidential authority in this regard, demonstrating that the US system of checks and balances remains alive and well. It also signals a realization that many in Congress on both sides of the political divide share Korea's and Japan's fears.

In the meantime, regardless of the reason or motivation, steps are already underway in all three capitals to institutionalize the agreements and practices outlined at the Trilateral Leaders' Summit at Camp David—the "virtual alliance" gets stronger by the day.

IPEF Makes Real Progress...For Now

This has already been a big year for the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF), the 14-member agreement to create a new economic order for the region. For many, IPEF aims to make up for US withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP, now known as the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement on Trans-Pacific Partnership, or CPTPP), although a key difference is that IPEF offers no market access arrangements.

IPEF consists of four pillars: trade, supply chains, clean economy, and fair economy. Most progress has been made on supply chains: an agreement was reached in May last year, and it went into effect Feb. 24, 2024 after it was ratified by five member governments. The agreement is the first of-its-kind to promote coordination among IPEF partners on building resilient, efficient, productive, sustainable, transparent, diversified, secure, fair, and inclusive supply chains. It requires member governments to identify within 120 days "critical supplies"—those that would have a large, negative impact in the event of a shortage—so that they can begin working on ways to mitigate the damage if supply shortages occur. They must also set up three bodies—the Supply Chain Council, a Crisis Response Network and a Labor Rights Advisory Board—to address such contingencies. These are "the most tangible outcomes of IPEF so far."

At its March 2024 virtual ministerial meeting, the group released final texts of the clean economy and fair economy pillars, as well as the final Agreement of Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity. That conclave launched four new Cooperative Work Programs (CWPs)—on carbon markets, clean energy enhancement, workforce development efforts, and clean aviation fuel—and announced the inaugural IPEF Clean Economy Investor Forum will be held in Singapore on June 5-6, while also providing details on the IPEF Catalytic Capital Fund. That will have \$33 million in initial grant funding and (is planned/ hoped) to catalyze up to \$3.3 billion in private investment for climate infrastructure projects in IPEF economies party to its Clean Economy Agreement. Fund founding supporters include Australia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and the US.

Finalization of the clean economy and fair economy pillars is anticipated later this year. The fate of the trade pillar is uncertain, given mounting resistance in the United States. Worse, as above, all progress is considered imperiled by a Trump presidency. The GOP candidate has called IPEF “TPP two” and promised to withdraw the US from it as he did its predecessor.

CHRONOLOGY OF REGIONAL OVERVIEW

JANUARY–APRIL 2024

Jan. 1, 2024: Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen [calls](#) for peaceful coexistence with Beijing, just hours after China's President Xi Jinping reiterated his ambition to "reunify."

Jan. 1, 2024: Taiwan's one-year compulsory military service for men goes into effect.

Jan. 1, 2024: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and President Xi [vow](#) to increase cooperation between the two countries in New Year messages.

Jan. 1, 2024: President Xi [exchanges](#) congratulations with President Biden on the 45th anniversary of diplomatic ties between the two countries.

Jan. 2, 2024: South Korea [protests](#) against Tokyo's inclusion of disputed islands in a tsunami advisory issued after a major earthquake struck a day earlier.

Jan. 2, 2024: Thailand and China [plan](#) to permanently waive visa requirements for each other's citizens in March.

Jan. 2, 2024: South Korea's Ministry of Unification (MOU) [launches](#) a new early warning system to detect Northern defectors who need more support or are at risk.

Jan. 2, 2024: China's Taiwan Affairs Office [calls](#) on Taiwan to promote a process of "peaceful reunification."

Jan. 3, 2024: Asian leaders [extend](#) support to Japan following the magnitude-7.6 earthquake that struck Japan on New Year's Day.

Jan. 3, 2024: Two Chinese balloons [cross](#) the median line separating Taiwan from China, with one balloon detected directly above the island.

Jan. 3, 2024: Philippines and the US [begin](#) a two-day joint patrol in the South China Sea.

Jan. 4, 2024: South Korean and US troops [conduct](#) joint combat firing drills near the North Korean border, as Pyongyang condemns the allies for pushing the region to "an inferno of nuclear war."

Jan. 4, 2024: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken [releases](#) a statement designating the People's Republic of China as one of 12 "Countries of Particular Concern for having engaged in or tolerated particularly severe violations of religious freedom."

Jan. 4, 2024: China [lodges](#) a protest to Myanmar after five people were injured by artillery shells fired in battles between the country's ruling junta and rebel groups.

Jan. 4, 2024: Two Chinese navy vessels [shadow](#) Philippine and US ships conducting joint patrols in the South China Sea.

Jan. 5, 2024: China's foreign ministry [spokesperson condemns](#) second US–Philippines patrol in the disputed South China Sea.

Jan. 5, 2024: US official [claims](#) that North Korea has sent several dozen ballistic missiles to Russia.

Jan. 5, 2024: US, Japan, and South Korea [hold](#) the inaugural Trilateral Indo-Pacific Dialogue in Washington, DC, an outcome of the 2023 Camp David Summit, and release a [Joint Statement](#).

Jan. 5, 2024: Huawei [dismantles](#) its public relations and government relations teams in the US and Canada.

Jan. 5, 2024: ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) [says](#) that from 0900 to 1100 the DPRK fired some 200 shells into the sea from two locations: [Jangsan](#) Cape, north of South Korea's northernmost

island of Baengnyeong, and Deungsan Cape, north of the ROK's western border island of Yeonpyeong. Residents of both islands are [ordered](#) to "evacuate" (meaning seek shelter, not to actually get off the islands: regular ferry services are briefly suspended). South Korea [carries](#) out a live-fire exercise in response to shelling by North Korea, which spurred the evacuation of two South Korean islands in the Yellow Sea.

Jan. 6, 2024: Taiwan's defense ministry [accuses](#) China of threatening aviation safety and waging psychological warfare with a recent spate of balloons spotted near or over the island, days before key Taiwanese elections.

Jan. 6, 2024: ROK JCS [report](#) a second day of KPA coastal artillery firing.

Jan. 7, 2024: Kim Yo Jong issues another [statement](#). She claims the KPA did no sea shelling yesterday, but rather "conducted a deceptive operation" with explosions on land—to see if Seoul could tell the difference: "The ROK military gangsters quickly took the bait we threw."

Jan. 7, 2024: PRC foreign ministry [announces](#) the imposition of countermeasures against five US defense industry companies for arms sales to "China's Taiwan Region" in accordance with its Anti-Foreign Sanctions Law.

Jan. 7, 2024: Maldives [suspends](#) three deputy ministers for disparaging Indian Prime Minister Modi, during a dip in ties between the two nations.

Jan. 7, 2024: North Korea [fires](#) shots into the sea north of South Korea's Yeonpyeong island.

Jan. 7, 2024: PRC foreign ministry [announces](#) the imposition of countermeasures against five US defense industry companies for arms sales to "China's Taiwan Region" in accordance with its Anti-Foreign Sanctions Law.

Jan. 8, 2024: Taiwan's defense ministry [detects](#) three more Chinese balloons flying over the Taiwan Strait, one of which crossed the island.

Jan. 8, 2024: An annual parachuting drill including forces from eight countries including

Britain, France, Germany, the US, and Japan's 1st Airborne Brigade [features](#) the recapturing of an island that had been occupied by an unnamed enemy force.

Jan. 8, 2024: US Justice Department, in partnership with other government partners, [sentences](#) a US Navy service member to 27 months in prison "for transmitting sensitive US military information to an intelligence officer from the People's Republic of China (PRC) in exchange for bribery payments."

Jan. 9, 2024: China [threatens](#) new trade measures against Taiwan, after it accused Beijing of "economic coercion" ahead of elections and expressed anger at a surprise Chinese satellite launch over its airspace.

Jan. 9, 2024: As it has done ever since 1996, the Korean Institute for National Unification ([KINU](#)), the ROK government's main think-tank on North Korea, [releases](#) its annual *White Paper on Human Rights in North Korea*.

Jan. 11, 2024: China and the Maldives [upgrade](#) relations during newly-elected President Muizzu's first state visit to Beijing.

Jan. 11, 2024: South Korean Supreme Court [upholds](#) appellate court's ruling that orders Nippon Steel Corp. to provide compensation for the family of a South Korean wartime labor victim. The Japanese Foreign Ministry [says](#) this is "extremely regrettable and totally unacceptable."

Jan. 11, 2024: Aso Taro, LDP vice-president and former prime minister, [speaks](#) to the US Congress and, separately, to reporters saying that the Japanese government may regard a contingency in Taiwan as a situation threatening the existence of Japan, thus implying that Japan may exercise the right of collective self-defense based on 2015 national security legislation.

Jan. 11, 2024: NK News [reports](#) that several North Korean propaganda websites targeting South Korea went offline simultaneously. Sites affected include *Uriminzokkiri*, *DPRK Today*, *Arirang Meari*, *Tongil Voice*, and *Ryomyong*. This appears related to Pyongyang trying to work out Kim Jong Un's new line on South Korea.

Jan. 11, 2024: Myanmar's junta chief, Min Aung Hlaing, [meets](#) a special envoy from ASEAN, which has encouraged peace efforts in the country.

Jan. 11, 2024: Malaysia and Singapore [agree](#) to jointly develop a special economic zone (SEZ) in the southern Malaysian state of Johor.

Jan. 12, 2024: China brokers a truce and ceasefire agreement in Kunming between Myanmar's military regime and an alliance of Myanmar's ethnic minority groups.

Jan. 12, 2024: United States [imposes](#) sanctions on three Russian entities (the Ashuluk Firing Range, 224th Flight Unit State Airlines, and the Vladimirovka Advanced Weapons and Research Complex) and one individual (Vladimir Mikheyshchik, general director of 224th Flight Unit State Airlines) for their involvement in the transfer and testing of North Korean ballistic missiles for Russia's use against Ukraine.

Jan. 12, 2024: 14th Ministerial-level meeting of the India-US Trade Policy Forum [commences](#). The Ministers took stock of the progress made in addressing concerns impacting the bilateral trade relationship since the 13th TPF in January 2023. This was highlighted by the historic settlement of all seven longstanding trade disputes at the World Trade Organization (WTO) between the two countries. Key areas of discussion were: critical minerals, supply chains, and trade in high-tech products.

Jan. 12, 2024: Chinese Coast Guard ships are videotaped by the Philippines [driving away](#) Philippine fishing boats near the disputed Scarborough Shoal.

Jan. 13, 2024: Lai Ching-te of the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party [is elected](#) president of Taiwan, but his party loses control of the Legislative Yuan. The following day China [says](#) Taiwan's ruling DPP does not represent the island despite its victory. President Joseph [Biden says, "We do not support](#)

[independence"](#) when asked to comment on the results of Taiwan's election.

Jan. 15, 2024: Maldives [asks](#) India to withdraw its troops by March 15.

Jan. 15, 2024: North Korea [says](#) it has successfully test-fired a solid-fuel intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM) carrying a hypersonic warhead.

Jan. 15, 2024: US, Japan, and South Korea [launch](#) a three-day joint naval exercise to strengthen "deterrence and response capabilities" in response to North Korea and to respond to "maritime security threats."

Jan. 15, 2024: Nauru [severs](#) ties with Taiwan, switching its political allegiance to China.

Jan. 15, 2024: White House dispatches former US National Security Advisor Steven Hadley and Former Deputy Secretary of James Steinberg to Taiwan to meet President Tsai Ing-wen, President-elect Lai, and leaders of opposition parties in a show of US support for Taiwan after the election.

Jan. 15, 2024: (North) Korea Central News Agency briefly [reports](#) that on Jan. 14 "the DPRK Missile Administration conducted a test-fire of an intermediate-range solid-fuel ballistic missile loaded with a hypersonic maneuverable controlled warhead."

Jan. 15, 2024: North Korea's Supreme People's Assembly [abolishes](#) three bodies handling inter-Korean matters: the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Country (CPRK), the National Economic Cooperation Bureau, and the Kumgangsan International Tourism Administration.

Jan. 15, 2024: Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. [congratulates](#) the winner of Taiwan's presidential election, Lai Ching-te.

Jan. 17, 2024: US, South Korea, and Japan [conduct](#) combined naval exercises in a show of strength against North Korea.

Jan. 17, 2024: South Korea [sanctions](#) 11 vessels, two individuals, and three companies. Most are North Korean, and all have been named in UN Panel of Experts (PoE) reports as involved in ship-to-ship transfers of oil, coal, and other products: violating UN Security Council (UNSC) sanctions against the DPRK.

Jan. 17, 2024: China and the Philippines [agree](#) to improve maritime communication and to properly manage conflicts and differences through friendly talks.

Jan. 18, 2024: MOU data [show](#) that North Korean defector arrivals almost tripled in 2023.

Jan. 19, 2024: Japan and NATO [begin](#) talks to establish a secure communication line to quickly share sensitive security information.

Jan. 21, 2024: Taiwan [says](#) that six Chinese balloons either flew over the island or through airspace just north of it, while Chinese warplanes and navy ships were also detected in the area.

Jan. 23, 2024: Vietnam's ambassador [urges](#) Washington to end its “non-market economy” label on Hanoi, warning that maintaining punitive duties on Vietnamese goods is bad for bilateral ties.

Jan. 23, 2024: Co-chairs of the US Congressional Taiwan Caucus [make](#) the first trip by US lawmakers to Taiwan after the presidential election.

Jan. 23, 2024: China and Nauru formally [restore](#) diplomatic relations after the Pacific island nation cut its ties with Taiwan earlier this month.

Jan. 24, 2024: US navy destroyer USS *John Finn* transits the Taiwan Strait.

Jan. 24, 2024: After North Korea testfires several cruise missiles over the Yellow Sea, ROK MND Shin Won-sik [tells](#) ROKAF 17th Fighter Wing

Jan. 24, 2024: North Korea [appears](#) to have torn down a huge arch in its capital that symbolized reconciliation with South Korea, a week after

leader Kim Jong Un dismissed hopes for peaceful reunification.

Jan. 24, 2024: A newly released report says Japan's Air Self-Defense Force [scrambled](#) fighter jets 555 times from April to December 2023, of which 392 or about 70% of which were against Chinese aircraft, down by 70 scrambles year on year.

Jan. 24, 2024: North Korea [fires](#) several cruise missiles from its west coast into the sea.

Jan. 25, 2024: South Korea's Defense Acquisition Program Administration (DAPA) [says](#) that production of spy drones to monitor North Korea has begun, under a 471.7 billion won (\$353.6 million) contract it signed in December with a consortium comprising Korean Air and two defense firms, LIG Nex1 and Hanwha Systems.

Jan. 25, 2024: Chainalysis report [shows](#) that North Korea-linked hackers stole \$1 billion worth of crypto-currency through 20 attacks in 2023, the highest number of their hacks since record-keeping began in 2016.

Jan. 26, 2024: Taiwan's defense ministry [detects](#) 23 Chinese air force planes operating around Taiwan and carrying out “joint combat readiness patrols” with Chinese warships, ahead of high-level China-US talks in Thailand.

Jan. 26, 2024: Biden administration [proposes](#) a requirement on US cloud companies to determine whether foreign entities are accessing US data centers to train AI models, as part of a series of measures to prevent China from using US technology for AI.

Jan. 26, 2024: South Korea and the United States [conduct](#) their first cyber security drills to bolster their joint posture against rising cyber threats.

Jan. 26-27, 2024: Top Chinese diplomat Wang Yi [meets](#) US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan in Bangkok.

Jan. 28, 2024: North Korea [fires](#) several cruise missiles off its east coast, continuing a streak of

weapons tests that have drawn condemnation from the US, South Korea, and Japan.

Jan. 29, 2024: China's Wang Yi [says](#) that China and Thailand must accelerate the construction of a planned high-speed railway linking the countries.

Jan 29, 2024: US Commerce Department [issues](#) a proposed rule that would compel US cloud companies to alert the government when foreign clients train their most powerful AI models using the compute power provided by these cloud companies.

Jan. 29, 2024: Southeast Asian foreign ministers [press](#) for an end to Myanmar's conflict and express their support for a regional peace plan and a "Myanmar-owned and led solution" to the crisis.

Jan. 29, 2024: Papua New Guinea [engages](#) in talks with China on a potential security and policing deal.

Jan. 30, 2024: Japanese government sources [reveal](#) that four Chinese warships have been constantly deployed around Taiwan, likely aiming to block US and other forces by using the ships in conjunction with other warships nearby.

Jan. 30, 2024: CSIS Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative [reports that](#) Chinese Coast Guard and Maritime Militia blocking Philippine resupply missions to disputed Second Thomas Shoal had increased in frequency and intensity since 2022.

Jan. 30, 2024: Office of the United States Trade Representative [releases](#) the findings of its 2023 Review of Notorious Markets for Counterfeiting and Piracy, which lists several China-based e-commerce and social commerce markets, a cloud storage service, and "seven physical markets in China known for the manufacture, distribution, and sale of counterfeit goods."

Jan. 30, 2024: US and Chinese officials [commit](#) to working together to stem the flow of fentanyl into the US.

Jan. 30, 2024: North Korea [fires](#) multiple unidentified cruise missiles into the sea off its

west coast—the third time Pyongyang tested cruise missiles in less than a week.

Jan. 30, 2024: Philippine navy [detects](#) nearly 200 Chinese warships and maritime militia boats around Mischief Reef in the South China Sea.

Jan. 30–31, 2024: Taiwan's military [conducts](#) a two-day exercise at sea, on land, and in the air to practice defending against a surprise attack.

Jan. 31, 2024: US Department of Commerce announces that the IPEF Agreement Relating to Supply Chain Resilience will enter into force from today. Ratification occurs after five IPEF partners deposited their instruments of ratification, acceptance, or approval with the Depositary.

Jan. 31, 2024: United States, European Union, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Norway, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom [issue](#) a joint statement marking three years since the military coup in Myanmar on Feb. 1, 2021. The statement condemned the military's ongoing human rights abuses and urged "unified efforts by ASEAN" to resolve the crisis.

Feb. 1, 2024: KMT legislator and 2020 presidential candidate Han Kuo-yu is elected speaker of the Legislative Yuan.

Feb. 1, 2024: Philippine President Marcos [approves](#) the third phase of the military's modernization, which includes the purchase of the country's first submarine, to defend its maritime sovereignty in the South China Sea.

Feb. 1, 2024: South Korea [unveils](#) a new National Cybersecurity [Strategy](#).

Feb. 2, 2024: North Korea [says](#) it tested cruise missiles outfitted with "super-large" warheads and a new type of anti-aircraft missile.

Feb. 3, 2024: Thailand and Sri Lanka [sign](#) a free trade agreement, a move Sri Lanka hopes will help it emerge from its worst financial crisis in decades.

Feb. 5, 2024: Chinese-Australian writer Yang Hengjun [receives](#) a suspended death penalty in

China, and Australia is “appalled” by the sentence.

Feb. 5, 2024: US [urges](#) Papua New Guinea to turn down China's offer of a potential security pact, warning the Pacific nation against any security guarantee with Beijing.

Feb. 5-6, 2024: Senior officials from the Department of the Treasury and China's Ministry of Finance [hold](#) the third meeting of the Economic Working Group, the first time the meeting is held in China.

Feb. 6, 2024: China's Coast Guard [patrols](#) the waters of the Diaoyu Islands, which are territories in the East China Sea that are claimed by China, Japan and Taiwan.

Feb. 7, 2024: US National Security Agency and partners [issue](#) a Cybersecurity Advisory titled “PRC State-Sponsored Actors Compromise and Maintain Persistent Access to US Critical Infrastructure.”

Feb. 7, 2024: Department of Justice [arrests](#) an individual in California seeking to illegally transfer to China software and technology developed by the US government for use to detect nuclear missile launches and track ballistic and hypersonic missiles.

Feb. 7-8, 2024: USS *John Finn* (DDG 113) and USS *Gabrielle Giffords* (LCS 10) [conduct](#) trilateral operations with allied maritime forces from Japan and Australia in the South China Sea to “promote transparency, rule of law, freedom of navigation and all principles that underscore security and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific.”

Feb. 8, 2024: Kim Jong Un [says](#) North Korea would not hesitate to use all of its military power against its enemies if any of them used force against the country.

Feb. 8, 2024: Following Korean Supreme Court rulings upholding lower court decisions that order Japanese firms to compensate wartime labor victims, President Yoon [states](#) he “wish[es] to see cooperation between business people of the two countries” on the issue to improve bilateral ties.

Feb. 8, 2024: Pakistan elections take place, six months after parliament was dissolved. Ousted ex-Prime Minister Imran Khan's party, Tehreek-e-Insaf, [wins](#) the most seats at 100, but short of the 134 necessary to form a government. Shehbaz Sharif of the center-right Pakistan Muslim League is ultimately re-elected prime minister as the head of a coalition government.

Feb. 8, 2024: 2024 National Proliferation Financing Risk Assessment report [shows](#) that North Korea continues to engage in "malicious" cyber activities and mobilize information technology (IT) workers to bankroll its weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programs.

Feb. 9, 2024: South Korea [conducts](#) a US-led multinational air exercise, along with Japan, Australia, France and Canada, in Guam to enhance joint operability.

Feb. 9, 2024: US Navy and Philippine Navy (PN) [conduct](#) third iteration of the Maritime Cooperative Activity (MCA) in the South China Sea.

Feb. 9, 2024: Taiwan [detects](#) 8 Chinese balloons crossing the Taiwan Strait in an uptick of activity at the start of the Lunar New Year holiday.

Feb. 9, 2024: On her first [visit](#) to Taiwan since taking office in 2016, Tokyo Gov. Koike Yuriko spends two days in Taiwan “to strengthen ties with the island's leadership.”

Feb. 9, 2024: US Navy and Philippine Navy [conduct](#) the third iteration of the Maritime Cooperative Activity in the South China Sea, “reaffirming both nations' commitment to bolstering regional security and stability” and “in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific.”

Feb. 9-10, 2024: 7th Indian Ocean Conference [is held](#) in Perth, Western Australia.

Feb. 12-15, 2024: US Marines from III Marine Expeditionary Force and the US Agency for International Development [assist](#) the government of the Philippines in providing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief in response to severe flooding and landslides in the southern Philippine province of Mindanao.

Feb. 13, 2024: Australia's trade minister [plans](#) to talk with Chinese officials about the removal of restrictions on Australian imports and the suspended death sentence given to writer Yang Hengjun.

Feb. 14, 2024: Defense Minister Prabowo Subianto [wins](#) Indonesian presidential race with an absolute majority, the first candidate to do so since the 1998-99 democratic transition in Indonesia. Prabowo's campaign coalition does not win a majority in Parliament, which will require that he build a broad coalition within his Cabinet.

Feb. 14, 2024: Two Chinese fishermen [drown](#) while being chased by Taiwan's Coast Guard off the coast of Taiwan's Kinmen archipelago.

Feb. 14, 2024: US Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence Brian Nelson, testifying before the House of Representatives Committee on Financial Services, [lists](#) China as a threat to the US financial system and affirms "we will safeguard our priority interests, along with those of our allies and partners, and will protect human rights."

Feb. 14-18, 2024: Mongolian Prime Minister Oryun-Erdene Luvsannamsrai [visits](#) South Korea in an effort to bolster economic relations, particularly in mineral extraction, tourism, and urban development.

Feb. 15, 2024: USS *John Finn* (DDG 113) [conducts](#) a bilateral exercise with allied maritime forces from Japan in the South China Sea.

Feb. 15, 2024: DPRK media [report](#) that Kim Jong Un, at the test-firing of a new surface-to-sea missile named *Padasuri-6*—it means sea eagle—the previous day, termed the NLL "a ghost [line] without any ground in the light of international law."

Feb. 15, 2024: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's sister Kim Yo Jong [says](#) that there is no impediment to closer ties with Japan.

Feb. 16, 2024: Multi-agency Disruptive Technology Strike Force, led by the Departments of Justice and Commerce, [releases](#) a fact sheet on

its one-year anniversary summarizing its progress in its mission to "prevent nation-state actors [including China] from illicitly acquiring our most sensitive technology."

Feb. 16-17, 2024: [Liu Jianchao](#), head of the CCP's Liaison Department, travels to Moscow for [the first "For the Freedom of Nations" International Forum](#) of Supporters of the Struggle Against Modern Practices of Neocolonialism. The forum is launched by the "United Russia" party chaired by Dmitry Medvedev, [who meets Liu](#) on the sidelines of the forum. More than 400 participants from over 55 countries join. Russian FM Lavrov also speaks at the forum.

Feb. 17, 2024: India and Taiwan [sign](#) a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on migration and mobility that will open the doors for Indian workers to seek employment in the island.

Feb. 17, 2024: Chinese FM [Wang Yi](#) delivers a keynote speech at the annual Munich Security Conference (MSC). He reiterates China's commitment to promoting peace talks for the Ukraine crisis.

Feb. 18, 2024: China [increases](#) patrols in the waters off the coast of Taiwan's Kinmen archipelago, days after two of its fishermen drowned while being chased by the Taiwanese coast guard, which accused the boat of trespassing.

Feb. 18, 2024: Top diplomats of the G7 countries strongly [condemn](#) North Korea's arms transfers to Russia, calling it a direct violation of relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions.

Feb. 19, 2024: A US [B-52 bomber flies](#) with three Philippine jet fighters as part of three days of joint air patrols over disputed territory in the South China Sea, prompting Chinese condemnation.

Feb. 19, 2024: China [asks](#) the US to end the "unwarranted harassment" of its students, following renewed reports of interrogation and deportation at a US airport.

Feb. 20, 2024: Taiwan [protests](#) the Chinese coast guard's boarding of a tourist boat.

Feb. 20, 2024: Family of a South Korean wartime labor victim [withdraws](#) compensation of 60 million won (about \$44,000) from Hitachi Zosen Corp., marking the first time that a wartime labor victim accepts a Japanese company's compensation. In response, the Japanese government summoned Korean Ambassador to Japan Yun Duk-min to [protest](#).

Feb. 21, 2024: Biden-Harris Administration [issues](#) an [Executive Order](#) to bolster the cybersecurity of US maritime ports, which includes a "Maritime Security Directive on cyber risk management actions for ship-to-shore cranes manufactured by the People's Republic of China located at US Commercial Strategic Seaports."

Feb. 22, 2024: US Representative Mike Gallagher leads a bi-partisan delegation to Taiwan composed of members of the House Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party.

Feb. 22, 2024: Biden administration approves a \$75 million arms sale to upgrade a data communications system employed by Taiwan's military.

Feb. 22, 2024: President Biden [signs](#) an executive order to bolster defenses against cyberattacks on the nation's ports, as officials warn about the threat posed by Chinese hackers.

Feb. 22, 2024: Chinese coast guard [says](#) it drove off a Philippine vessel that had "illegally intruded" into waters near the Scarborough Shoal in the South China Sea—a claim disputed by the Philippines.

Feb. 23, 2024: Indonesia's and Australia's defense ministers [meet](#) in Jakarta to discuss the strengthening of security ties and the signing of a defense cooperation agreement.

Feb. 24, 2024: First agreement from the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) [goes into](#)

[effect](#) for five of the 14 IPEF members: Japan, India, Singapore, Fiji, and the United States.

Feb. 24, 2024: Using such foreign organizations as the US Defense Department's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) or the DoD affiliated Defense Innovation Unit (DIU), as models, Japan announces it will [launch](#) a research institute for innovative technology development this autumn.

Feb. 24, 2024: Japan and China [launch](#) a new round of discussions regarding the release of treated wastewater from the disaster-hit Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

Feb. 26, 2024: India and Japan [begin](#) a two-week "Dharma Guardian" military exercise to foster greater cooperation in confronting common security challenges.

Feb. 26, 2024: US [cautions](#) Pacific Islands nations against assistance from Chinese security forces after it was reported that Chinese police are working in Kiribati, a neighbor of Hawaii.

Feb. 27, 2024: Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs Permanent Secretary Albert Chua and Assistant Secretary Kritenbrink [meet](#) in Singapore to co-chair the 6th United States-Singapore Strategic Partnership Dialogue.

Feb. 27-March 8, 2024: 43rd iteration of *Joint Exercise Cobra Gold*, co-hosted by Thailand and the US, [takes place](#) in Rayong, Thailand. Over 33 nations train in the air, sea, and space domains.

Feb. 28, 2024: China [says](#) its coast guard patrols around the Kinmen islands near the Chinese coast are "beyond reproach" and dismisses complaints about the boarding of a Taiwan tourist boat.

Feb. 28, 2024: Beyond Parallel [reports](#) that since August 2023, there have been at least 25 different visits to Najin for the loading of munitions from North Korea to be delivered to Russia, and, at least 19 "dark vessels"—vessels with their AIS transmissions turned off to avoid outside detection—have visited Vostochny Port in Russia to both unload and load containers from the port. These voyages have reportedly supported the

transfer of more than 2.5 million rounds of artillery shells and other munitions.

Feb. 28, 2024: Biden-Harris administration [issues](#) an Executive Order on Preventing Access to Americans' Bulk Sensitive Personal Data and United States Government-Related Data by Countries of Concern.

Feb. 28, 2024: Philippine President Marcos [tells](#) Australia's Parliament that the strategic partnership between the two nations is more important than ever with peace in the region under threat from China.

Feb. 28-29, 2024: In Bangkok, Assistant Secretary Krittenbrink [co-leads](#) 9th US-Thailand Strategic Dialogue alongside Ministry of Foreign Affairs Permanent Secretary Eksiri Pintaruchi as well as the Second Strategic and Defense Dialogue alongside Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Indo-Pacific Security Affairs Jedidiah Royal. Both dialogues are conducted under the auspices of the US-Thai Communiqué on Strategic Alliance and Partnership.

Feb. 29, 2024: A Philippine lawmaker [demands](#) answers from Singapore about an alleged exclusivity agreement with pop star Taylor Swift.

Feb. 29, 2024: India [begins](#) replacing dozens of its military personnel in Maldives with civilian technical staff who will operate three aircraft given by India to provide humanitarian services.

Feb. 29, 2024: President Biden [orders](#) US investigation of national security risks posed by Chinese-made "smart cars" that can gather sensitive information about Americans driving them.

March 1, 2024: South Korea's President Yoon [calls](#) for unification on the March 1st Independence Movement Day, a holiday marking a 1919 Korean uprising against Japanese colonial rule.

March 1, 2024: China and Thailand implement a bilateral visa waiver agreement, enabling visitors from both countries to travel between China and Thailand without visa requirements. The measure is seen as a way to revive Thailand's

tourism industry as the new Thai government aims to attract more than 8 million Chinese visitors in 2024.

March 1, 2024: Tuvalu's Prime Minister Feleti Teo [reaffirms](#) that his government will maintain diplomatic ties with Taipei, ruling out a shift to Beijing.

March 2-8, 2024: China's Special Representative on Eurasian Affairs [Li Hui](#) travels to Russia, Poland, Ukraine, Germany, and France for his second round of talks on the peaceful settlement of the Ukraine conflict.

March 4, 2024: Maldives [signs](#) a military pact with China.

March 4, 2024: South Korea's National Intelligence Service [reveals](#) that DPRK hackers have broken into at least two ROK makers of chipmaking equipment.

March 4, 2024: Malaysia's Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim [defends](#) ties with China and complains of alleged pressure by the US and its regional allies to take sides in the West's rivalries with Beijing.

March 4, 2024: *Freedom Shield*, a large-scale annual US-ROK military drill, [begins](#). North Korea [calls](#) the ongoing South Korea-US military drills a plot to invade the country and threatens to take unspecified "responsible" military steps in response.

March 4-6, 2024: Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese [hosts](#) ASEAN and Timor-Leste leaders for the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit to celebrate 50 years of partnership.

March 5, 2024: Assistant Secretary Krittenbrink and Vietnam Standing Vice Foreign Minister Nguyen Minh Vu [conclude](#) 10th Asia-Pacific Dialogue in Hanoi, the first under the US-Vietnam Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

March 5, 2024: United States and India [hold](#) 20th meeting of the US-India Counter Terrorism Joint Working Group and 6th Designations Dialogue in Washington, DC.

March 5, 2024: USS *John Finn* (DDG 113) [conducts](#) a routine south-to-north Taiwan Strait transit “through a corridor in the Taiwan Strait that is beyond any coastal state’s territorial seas.”

March 5, 2024: Chinese and Philippine coast guard vessels [collide](#) in the South China Sea, injuring four Filipino crew members. US Department of State [releases](#) a press statement saying the US “stands with our ally the Philippines following the People’s Republic of China’s (PRC) provocative actions.

March 5, 2024: Singapore’s Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong [defends](#) the country’s exclusive arrangement with Taylor Swift.

March 5, 2024: Australia [announces](#) a \$1.3 billion fund to boost investment in Southeast Asia.

March 5-8, 2024: Indian EAM Subrahmanyam Jaishankar [goes](#) on a tour of East Asia, with stops in South Korea and Japan, to boost security and economic cooperation.

March 6, 2024: Philippines [says](#) it won’t let China remove a Filipino military outpost on a disputed shoal.

March 6, 2024: US Attorney General Merrick Garland [announces](#) the arrest and indictment of a Chinese national residing in California charged with theft of trade secrets in connection with an alleged plan to steal artificial intelligence-related technology from Google “while covertly working for China-based companies seeking an edge in the AI technology race.”

March 6, 2024: ASEAN leaders [call](#) for South China Sea disputes to be resolved without threats or force.

March 7, 2024: Australia [upgrades](#) relations with Vietnam, beginning an annual dialogue on minerals amid a push to shift supply chains away from China.

March 7, 2024: Malaysian Prime Minister Ibrahim [says](#) that attempts to contain China’s

rise will only aggravate the country and sow discord in the region.

March 8, 2024: North Korea’s Kim Jong Un [guides](#) an artillery firing drill, involving units near the border that are in firing range of Seoul.

March 8, 2024: Seoul’s Joint Chiefs of Staff [says](#) North Korea has tried to jam US-ROK navigation system during drills; no military or civilian damage from first GPS jamming by DPRK in eight years is reported.

March 8, 2024: US court [orders](#) forfeiture of 145 crypto accounts tied to North Korea cybercrime, Washington alleges two Chinese nationals used accounts to launder some \$100 million in virtual assets stolen by DPRK

March 10-13, 2024: New Zealand’s Foreign Minister Winston Peters [visits](#) India and says that India’s importance to New Zealand’s society, economy, and security is growing.

March 11, 2024: President Biden’s 2025 budget proposal [includes](#) a \$100 million request to help Taiwan strengthen cross-strait deterrence. Defense Department requests \$500 million to replenish US munitions stockpiles drawn down to aid Taiwan through Presidential Drawdown Authority.

March 12, 2024: China [protests](#) against Prime Minister Modi’s new tunnel built in territories along the two countries’ disputed Himalayan border.

March 12, 2024: China [demands](#) that Japan set up a compensation system for potential economic damage from the release of treated radioactive wastewater from the Fukushima nuclear plant.

March 12, 2024: China’s foreign ministry [responds](#) to Biden’s budget proposal, saying it “strongly opposes” US efforts to arm Taiwan and “will take resolute measures to firmly safeguard its own sovereignty and territorial integrity.”

March 13, 2024: SDF and US Marine Corps [conduct](#) the annual *Iron Fist* exercise to practice recapturing remote Japanese Islands.

March 13, 2024: Thailand [expects](#) to complete its negotiations over a free trade agreement with the European Union by the end of next year.

March 14, 2024: North Korea [hosts](#) a military demonstration involving a new battle tank, as South Korea and the US wrap up joint drills.

March 14, 2024: President Joe Biden [opposes](#) the planned sale of US Steel to Japan's Nippon Steel, saying that the US needs to "maintain strong American steel companies powered by American steel workers."

March 15, 2024: India [rejects](#) US concern over the implementation of a religion-based citizenship law as "misplaced, misinformed, and unwarranted."

March 17, 2024: Russian President Vladimir Putin officially wins his fifth presidential term with [87.28%](#) of the vote.

March 18, 2024: North Korea [fires](#) short-range ballistic missiles into the sea for the first time in two months, as US Secretary of State Antony Blinken visits Seoul for a conference hosted by President Yoon Suk Yeol on advancing democracy.

March 18, 2024: China's foreign minister [meets](#) New Zealand counterpart at the start of a tour that will also include Australia.

March 19, 2024: Kim Jong Un [oversees](#) firing drills in the western region of North Korea by artillery units involving "newly-equipped super-large" rocket launchers.

March 19, 2024: US officials [approve](#) legislation providing billions of dollars in funding for the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau.

March 19, 2024: US Secretary of State Blinken [underscores](#) Washington's "ironclad commitment" to help defend the Philippines in case of an armed attack against its forces in a

news conference with Philippine counterpart Enrique Manalo.

March 19, 2024: US State Department spokesperson [says](#) that the US believes Hong Kong's new national security law has the potential to accelerate the closing of a once open society.

March 19-20, 2024: Japan [hosts](#) officials from 14 Pacific Island countries for the 2nd Japan Pacific Islands Defence Dialogue.

March 20, 2024: North Korea [says](#) it has successfully conducted a ground jet test of a solid-fuel engine for a new type of intermediate hypersonic missile amid heightened tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

March 20, 2024: Japanese Coast Guard [states](#) that a fleet of Chinese ships sailed in the territorial waters of the Diaoyu Islands on March 20.

March 20, 2024: Taiwan's foreign minister [says](#) that China has built "enormous" military bases on three islands in the South China Sea, but Taipei is not looking to further escalate tensions.

March 20, 2024: China's Wang Yi [meets](#) with Australian counterpart Penny Wong in Canberra—the most highest level meeting in Australia between the two nations since 2017.

March 21, 2024: China [opposes](#) the "denigration and smearing" by the US of the new Hong Kong security law passed earlier this week.

March 21, 2024: A report by the UN panel of experts shows that North Korea engages in "malicious" cyber activities to generate about half of its foreign currency revenue and bankroll its weapons programs.

March 21, 2024: Vietnamese President Vo Van Thuong, in office only a year, [is pushed out](#) of power in the Vietnamese Communist Party's anti-corruption purge. A successor is not yet named.

March 21, 2024: China's coast guard [says](#) a number of Philippine personnel ignored its warnings and illegally landed on a reef in the Spratly Islands.

March 22, 2024: China and Singapore announce that they will restart a high-level bilateral forum, the Social Governance Forum, in June.

March 22, 2024: Unidentified gunmen conduct [a terrorist attack](#) in Crocus City Hall in Krasnogorsk in the Moscow Region, killing [143 people](#) and wounding more than 80.

March 22, 2024: Chinese coast guard ships unsuccessfully [attempt](#) to block two Philippine government vessels carrying scientists from reaching two sandbars in the South China Sea.

March 22, 2024: Australia and the UK [criticize](#) China for its actions in Hong Kong and the South China Sea and its support of Russia.

March 22, 2024: Philippines [plans](#) to build a port in its northernmost islands without help from the US military.

March 23, 2024: Japanese government announces [plans](#) to build underground evacuation shelters capable of accommodating residents for about two weeks in times of emergency in remote islands near Taiwan, including Yonaguni and Ishigaki.

March 23, 2024: State Department [issues](#) a statement condemning PRC actions against Philippine maritime operations in the South China Sea, pointing to the repeated use of water cannons and reckless blocking maneuvers resulted in injuries to Filipino service members and significant damage to their resupply vessel, rendering it immobile.

March 23, 2024: President Biden signs into law the US federal government's Fiscal Year 2024 spending bill, which includes \$300 million in Foreign Military Financing loans for Taiwan under the State Department.

March 23, 2024: Another [major incident](#) takes place involving Chinese Coast Guard ships blocking access to Second Thomas Shoal by a

Philippines supply ship with construction materials and two accompanying Coast Guard vessels. Beijing accuses the United States of instigating Manila's provocations and warns that Manila's relations with China were "at a cross roads."

March 24-April 1, 2024: Nepal's newly-appointed foreign minister, Narayan Kaji Shrestha, [visits](#) China on his first foreign visit.

March 25, 2024: North Korea [says](#) that Prime Minister Kishida Fumio has offered to meet with leader Kim Jong Un but stresses that prospects for this summit depend on Tokyo tolerating the North's weapons program and ignoring its past abductions of Japanese nationals.

March 25, 2024: Secretary Blinken [meets](#) Vietnamese Foreign Minister Bui Thanh Son in Washington, for the inaugural Comprehensive Strategic Partnership foreign ministerial meeting.

March 25, 2024: Philippines [lodges](#) its "strongest protest" against Beijing after a water cannon assault by the Chinese coast guard injured Filipino navy crew members in the South China Sea.

March 25, 2024: US and UK [accuse](#) hackers linked to China of being behind "malicious" cyber campaigns targeting political figures.

March 26, 2024: China [responds](#) to the hacking allegations, urging the US and UK to stop slandering and smearing China and imposing unilateral sanctions on the country.

March 26, 2024: World's longest twin-lane tunnel officially [opens](#), resulting in a heated exchange of remarks between Beijing and New Delhi. Both countries claim the Arunachal Pradesh region where it was built.

March 26, 2024: New Zealand [alleges](#) that hackers linked to the Chinese government launched a state-sponsored operation that targeted New Zealand's Parliament in 2021.

March 26, 2024: China [files](#) a WTO complaint against the US over what it says are discriminatory requirements for electric vehicle subsidies.

March 27, 2024: President Xi [meets](#) representatives of US business, strategic and academic communities at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. It is his first meeting with a visiting US business delegation since 2015.

March 27, 2024: India strongly [rejects](#) remarks made by the United States and Germany on the arrest of key opposition leader and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal a month before its national election.

March 27, 2024: China's Xi [calls](#) for closer trade ties with the US during a meeting with top American business leaders.

March 27, 2024: Taiwan [commissions](#) two new navy ships as a safeguard against the rising threat from China, which has been increasing its naval and air force missions around the island.

March 28, 2024: China [lifts](#) its punitive tariffs on Australia's wine exports, signaling an end to a three-year campaign of trade pressure on Canberra.

March 28, 2024: US Marines join a large-scale combined exercise at a high-tech training facility in South Korea for the first time amid efforts to boost readiness against North Korean threats.

March 28, 2024: President Marcos [says](#) that the Philippines will take action against dangerous attacks by the Chinese coast guard and suspected militia ships in the South China Sea.

March 29, 2024: US, Japan, and South Korea [hold](#) their [second](#) "Trilateral Diplomacy Working Group for Foreign Ministry Cooperation on North Korea's Cyber Threats."

March 29, 2024: North Korea's foreign minister [says](#) the country has no interest in dialogue with Japan.

March 29, 2024: Spokesman of former Philippine leader Rodrigo Duterte [alleges](#) that Duterte made a "gentleman's agreement" with Chinese President Xi to maintain the status quo in the South China Sea while he was in office.

March 30, 2024: US [says](#) it will impose new visa restrictions on a number of Hong Kong officials over the crackdown on rights and freedoms in the Chinese-ruled territory.

March 31, 2024: According to Japan's Coast Guard, two Chinese Coast guard ships [stay](#) in Japanese waters near the contested Senkaku (Diaoyu) Islands for more than two days before leaving on the 30th.

April 1, 2024: Indonesian President-elect Prabowo Subianto [pledges](#) to continue his country's friendly policy toward China as he meets with Chinese leader Xi in Beijing.

April 2, 2024: Japanese government [designates](#) 16 airports and ports in seven prefectures where the SDFs and the coast guard will be granted peacetime use, as part of efforts to boost the country's defenses.

April 2, 2024: Philippines' national security adviser and US counterpart [discuss](#) "coercive, aggressive and deceptive actions" by Beijing in the South China Sea.

April 2, 2024: ISEAS-Yusof Institute in Singapore [releases](#) the 2024 State of Southeast Asia Survey. The Survey finds that a slight majority of respondents in the region would align with China rather than the United States if they felt compelled to choose.

April 2, 2024: North Korea [fires](#) a suspected intermediate-range ballistic missile into the sea, drawing swift condemnation from South Korea, Japan, and the US.

April 2, 2024: India [rejects](#) China's renaming of nearly 30 places in its northeastern Himalayan

state of Arunachal Pradesh, calling the move “senseless” and reaffirming that the border province is an “integral” part of India.

April 3, 2024: President Biden [speaks](#) with China’s Xi for nearly two hours on a range of topics including TikTok ownership, tensions in the South China Sea, and whether American sanctions against China amounted to de-risking or decoupling.

April 3, 2024: Japan's industry ministry [approves](#) subsidies up to 590 billion yen (\$3.9 billion) for chip foundry venture Rapidus as Tokyo pushes forward with plans to rebuild the country's chip manufacturing base amid concerns over supply chain security.

April 3, 2024: US [issues](#) a response of “strong opposition” to China’s renaming of geographical areas—mountains, rivers, and residential areas—in the Indian-administered Arunachal Pradesh state. Washington’s statement of opposition comes after Beijing released a list of 30 new names for places along the 1,865-mile disputed Himalayan border between China and India, citing China’s list issuance as a “unilateral attempt” to assert claim over the disputed territory of strategic interest.

April 3, 2024: Philippines [says](#) it is prepared to respond to China’s attempts to disrupt its supply missions in the South China Sea and protect its troops stationed in the waterway.

April 3, 2024: Indonesia’s Prabowo [meets](#) Prime Minister Kishida and says he wants to deepen security and economic cooperation with Japan.

April 3-4, 2024: Representatives from US Indo-Pacific Command, US Pacific Fleet, and US Pacific Air Forces [meet](#) with People's Liberation Army representatives in Honolulu, Hawaii for the first Military Maritime Consultative Agreement working group held since December 2021.

April 4, 2024: Starting a five-day visit to China, US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen [calls](#) on China to address manufacturing overcapacity and to create a level playing field for American companies and workers.

April 4-5, 2024: US-EU Trade and Technology Council holds its sixth ministerial meeting and [releases](#) a joint statement saying the parties have “engaged with other countries who share our concerns about China’s non-market policies and practices in the medical devices sector, and conveyed these concerns directly to China.”

April 6, 2024: US and China [hold](#) maritime military talks this week in Hawaii.

April 7, 2024: South Korea [launches](#) its second military spy satellite into orbit, days after North Korea reaffirmed its plan to launch multiple reconnaissance satellites this year.

April 7, 2024: Vietnam National Assembly Chairman Vuong Dinh Hue [meets](#) President Xi in Beijing and proposes more cooperation on trade and development projects.

April 7, 2024: Australia-Japan-Philippines-United States Maritime Cooperative Activity [takes place](#) in the disputed South China Sea.

April 8, 2024: UK, US, and Australia [consider](#) working with Japan through their AUKUS security pact.

April 8, 2024: US Department of Commerce announces a \$6.6 billion subsidy and up to \$5 billion in loans to support TSMC’s new fab facility in Arizona.

April 8, 2024: Prime Minister Kishida [arrives](#) in Washington, kicking off a six-day official visit.

April 8, 2024: President Xi and Russia’s foreign minister, Sergey Lavrov, [meet](#) in Beijing.

April 9, 2024: President Marcos [says](#) he is “horried” to learn of an agreement between his predecessor and China that bars Manila from shipping construction materials to a military outpost in the South China Sea.

April 10, 2024: Former Taiwan president and KMT elder Ma Ying-jeou meets President Xi in Beijing, their first meeting since November 2015,

when they met in Singapore as Ma's presidency drew to a close.

April 10, 2024: President Biden and Prime Minister Kishida [issue](#) a joint leaders' statement, declaring that their countries will be "global partners" going forward, acting together on the world stage to uphold a free and open international order based on the rule of law.

April 10, 2024: South Korea's ruling People Power Party [suffers](#) a defeat in National Assembly elections, raising questions about the long-term sustainability of President Yoon Suk Yeol's agenda.

April 10, 2024: China [accuses](#) the EU of protectionism and "reckless distortion" of the definition of subsidies in response to a new EU investigation into Chinese wind turbine makers.

April 11, 2024: Prime Minister Kishida [addresses](#) a joint session of the US Congress. He [states](#) that "China's current external stance and military actions present an unprecedented and the greatest strategic challenge, not only to the peace and security of Japan but to the peace and stability of the international community at large."

April 11, 2024: Visiting Kim Jong Il University of Military and Politics (some DPRK [media](#) style this Kim Jong Il Military and Political Academy), Kim Jong Un [says](#): "Now is the time to be more thoroughly prepared for a war than ever before." KCNA's photos show blurred maps and a model, which appear to depict South Korea and central Seoul.

April 11, 2024: China bans senior executives from two US defense contractors, General Atomics Aeronautical Systems and General Dynamics Land Systems, in retaliation for US sales of their systems to Taiwan.

April 11, 2024: President Biden [hosts](#) a first-ever joint meeting with the leaders of Japan and the Philippines.

April 11, 2024: China's top legislator Zhao Leji [says](#) China is willing to work closely with the North Korean legislature to help relations reach a "higher level."

April 11, 2024: Japan-Philippines-US Summit [takes](#) place between PM Kishida, President Marcos, and President Joe Biden. Japan-Philippines Foreign Ministers' Meeting is also [held](#) between FM Kamikawa and FS Manalo.

April 12, 2024: US [holds](#) a two-day joint military exercise with Japan and South Korea.

April 12, 2024: US, Japan, and South Korea [conclude](#) two-day naval exercise to strengthen response capabilities against the North.

April 12, 2024: Inaugural Philippines-United States 3+3 Senior Officials Meeting [is launched](#) in Washington.

April 13, 2024: China's Zhao [meets](#) Kim Jong Un in Pyongyang, expressing Beijing's willingness to deepen trust and boost cooperation.

April 14, 2024: Aiming to [reduce](#) their reliance on China for critical minerals, Japan, the US and the Philippines agree to a framework for a stable supply of nickel under which resource-rich countries and high-consumption countries in Europe, Africa and other regions work together to share information and invest in developing critical minerals.

April 16, 2024: South Korea [summons](#) a Japanese diplomat to protest against Japan's claim on a group of islands at the center of a longstanding territorial dispute.

April 16, 2024: US [reiterates](#) to China its concerns over what it sees as industrial overcapacity in China, prompting Beijing officials to push back against that accusation.

April 16, 2024: US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin and Chinese counterpart Dong Jun [hold](#) their first substantive talks in nearly 18 months as the two countries work to restore military ties.

April 16, 2024: Fourth US–People’s Republic of China Economic and Financial Working Groups are [held](#) in Washington, DC, both of which discuss macro- and micro-issues of import and conclude with mutual commitments to continually deepen bilateral communications.

April 17, 2024: US Navy [flies](#) an aircraft through the Taiwan Strait, as China sends fighter jets to monitor the plane’s passage.

April 17, 2024: President Biden [gives](#) a speech in a presidential campaign stop at the United Steelworkers Headquarters in Pennsylvania titled “New Actions to Protect US Steel and Shipbuilding Industry from China’s Unfair Practices.”

April 17, 2024: US, Japanese, and South Korean finance leaders [agree](#) to consult closely on foreign exchange and market developments in a trilateral meeting.

April 17, 2024: Office of the USTR, following a review of a petition filed on March 12 by five US national labor unions, [initiates](#) a Section 301 investigation into “the PRC’s longstanding efforts to dominate the maritime, logistics, and shipbuilding sectors.” Beijing [expresses](#) strong dissatisfaction to the investigation.

April 18–23, 2024: China’s Wang Yi [pays](#) an official visit to Indonesia, Cambodia, and Papua New Guinea.

April 18, 2024: China’s Wang Yi [meets](#) Indonesian counterpart, Retno Marsudi, in Jakarta, and the two nations pledge to strengthen economic ties and maintain peace and stability in the region.

April 18, 2024: China [claims](#) that China and the Philippines entered a “gentleman’s agreement” to avoid conflict in the South China Sea under former President Duterte.

April 18, 2024: ASEAN Foreign Ministers [issue](#) a joint statement of concern over the recent escalation of conflict in Myanmar, including around Myawaddy, Kayin State, along the border area between Myanmar and Thailand and in Rakhine State of Myanmar, both which have caused significant displacement of civilians.

April 19, 2024: General elections begin in India to determine majority control of the Lok Sabha, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking a third term. Voting is to continue through June 1.

April 19, 2024: Meeting in Washington, [G7 foreign ministers call peace and stability](#) across the Taiwan Strait “indispensable to security and prosperity for the whole international community,” and call for peaceful resolution of cross-strait issues. They add, “We support Taiwan’s meaningful participation in international organizations, including in the World Health Assembly and WHO technical meetings.”

April 19, 2024: Taiwan [says](#) China’s decision to open new air routes that run close to two Taiwanese-controlled islands was a flight safety risk taken without consultation.

April 20, 2024: [China’s Ministry of Commerce imposes anti-dumping duties](#) on polycarbonate imported from Taiwan for a period of five years.

April 22, 2024: US–Philippine 39th *Balikatan Exercise*, joined in part by the French navy and set to conclude on May 10, [kicks off](#) in the South China Sea region.

April 22, 2024: China [accuses](#) the US of “stoking military confrontation” with the recent deployment of a powerful missile launcher to exercises in the Philippines.

April 23, 2024: Japan’s coastguard [extends](#) an initiative designed to help other nations counter Chinese expansion in the South China Sea to the Marshall Islands and Micronesia.

April 23–25, 2024: US and South Korean officials [meet](#) in Hawaii for talks on sharing the cost of keeping American troops in South Korea, with the US seeking “a fair and equitable outcome” that will strengthen the alliance.

April 24, 2024: Descendants of 18 Chinese “comfort women” who were sexually exploited by Japanese soldiers during World War II file

[lawsuits](#) in the Shanxi High People's Court against the Japanese government.

April 24, 2024: President-elect Lai Ching-te announces ministerial level appointments to his national security and cross-Strait team. Almost all are holdovers from President Tsai's team, signaling again Lai's stated commitment to continue Tsai's policies.

April 24, 2024: US Congress [passes](#) a sweeping foreign aid package which includes arms support for Taiwan, as China urges Washington to stop selling weapons to Taipei.

April 24-26, 2024: US Secretary of State Blinken [goes](#) on an official visit to China.

April 25, 2024: According to a survey conducted by *Yomiuri* in February and March, 84% of respondents feel that Japan is in a threatening security environment. Respondents who considered China a threat rose to 91%, up five percentage points from last year's survey.

April 26, 2024: France and the Philippines [plan](#) to begin talks next month on a defense pact that would allow troops from each country to hold exercises in the other's territory.

April 26, 2024: Department of Homeland Security [announces](#) the establishment of the Artificial Intelligence Safety and Security Board to advise the Department and the broader public on the "safe and secure development and deployment of AI technology in our nation's critical infrastructure" to stay ahead of potentially hostile nation-state actors such as the PRC.

April 26, 2024: *Korean Central News Agency* [reports](#) that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has guided the test of a rocket developed by "newly-founded" military factory, as North Korea celebrates 92nd founding anniversary of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army.

April 26, 2024: US Secretary of State Blinken [raises](#) concerns about China's support for Russia's military, during five-and-a-half hours of talks with China's Wang Yi in Beijing.

April 27, 2024: Philippines [denies](#) the Chinese claim that the two countries reached an agreement over an escalating maritime dispute in the South China Sea, calling the claim propaganda.

April 29, 2024: China [hints](#) that it would retaliate after President Biden signed legislation to boost Taiwan's defenses and get TikTok's Chinese owner to divest from the social media platform.

April 29, 2024: Philippines' House of Representatives [begins](#) to investigate former President Duterte over a pact he allegedly made with China.

April 29, 2024: US and Taiwan [start](#) another in-person negotiating round for the US-Taiwan Initiative on 21st Century Trade in Taipei.

April 29, 2024: Victor Cha [conducts](#) the first US multi-question polling of strategic elites in South Korea on the nuclear question and finds that the vast majority of South Korean strategic elites (66%) do not favor nuclearization and that confidence in the United States as a security provider remains strong.

April 30, 2024: Philippines [accuses](#) China's coast guard of harassment and of damaging two of its boats in the South China Sea, rejecting Beijing's position that it had expelled those vessels from the hotly contested shoal.

April 30, 2024: US Labor Department official [calls](#) on international companies to leave Xinjiang due to forced labor concerns.

April 30, 2024: US Authorities [announce](#) that Indian agents may have been involved in the attempted murder of a Sikh separatist in the United States, and the assassination of another in Canada. India's foreign ministry said *The Washington Post* report made "unwarranted and unsubstantiated imputations on a serious matter," while New Delhi is investigating the issue.

April 30, 2024: MOU [reports](#) that in the first quarter 43 North Korean defectors—eight men

and 35 women—arrived in the South: fewer than in the previous quarter (57), but more than in the same period in 2023 (34).

