



Consortium of Indo-Pacific
Researchers

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Greetings Colleagues,

The Consortium is pleased to share its latest newsletter for the Indo-Pacific. Press reply button for your feedback and comments.

Xi's State Visit to Vietnam



Figure 1: Chinese and Vietnamese leaders at welcome ceremony. IMAGE: CNN

Why did it take seven years for Xi to visit Vietnam? How significant is his visit at this point?

China's President Xi Jinping [visited](#) Hanoi on December 12-13, 2023, on a state visit. His visit aims to boost China's receding economy and geopolitical standing with the U.S.'s intense competition in the Indo-Pacific. Leaders from both sides agreed to build a community with a "shared future" as Xi's visit marks 15 years of China's "comprehensive strategic partnership" with Vietnam.

Yes, economic, and political factors are at play to showcase the significance of the Chinese Premier's visit at this critical moment in China's economic growth and strategic interests in the Indo-Pacific. As the [World Bank has forecasted](#) China's economic slowdown in 2024 to 4.5% and 4.3% in 2025, it scares China to slip from the second-largest economy and the ambitions to be the largest economy in the world. Xi's visit primarily got the magnitude to boost the trade ties with Vietnam as both countries [signed 36 cooperation documents](#) in areas such as infrastructure, trade, and security.

China and Vietnam have a strong trade relationship. Notably, China is Vietnam's [largest trade partner](#), and their bilateral trade reached US\$ 175.6 billion in 2022. Vietnam's export share is US\$ 57.7 billion, and imports are US\$ 117.87 billion. China has over 4,000 active projects in Vietnam and has a cumulative investment of over US\$ 26 billion. It is worth mentioning that Vietnam is one of the fastest-growing economy in Asia and [aspires](#) to become a high-income country by 2045.

On the political side, China sees Vietnam as a critical partner in the competition with the United States. It is noted that President Biden visited Vietnam in September 2023, and Vietnam announced U.S.-Vietnam ties at the level of comprehensive strategic partnership. Biden [stated](#) that elevating the partnership is not about containing China but to strengthening ties and building alliance around the world to maintain stability. Furthermore, Vietnam recently boosted its

relations with Japan at the level of Comprehensive strategic partnership. Vietnam is also cooperating with South Korea, India, and Canada in numerous domains of development.

Surprisingly, Xi's visit doesn't reflect much on the South China Sea, where Vietnam and other Southeast Asian countries have boundary disputes with China. And China's nine-dash-line map with assertive behavior creates a continuous uproar in the Indo-Pacific region. [Read More](#)

Pakistan Army Chief Arrives in Washington

Secretary of Defense Austin [hosted](#) Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir at the Pentagon on December 12, 2023. Both leaders discussed “regional security developments and potential areas for bilateral defense cooperation.” It is [reported](#) that Munir also seeks security assistance against the *Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan* (TTP) and Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP). As per [reports](#), there may be talks on the status of Jammu and Kashmir as [recently India's Supreme Court](#) gave a ruling on Article 370. It is worth mentioning that Pakistan's general election is scheduled for Feb. 8, 2024. [Read More](#)

Tokyo Hosts 50th ASEAN-Japan Summit

ASEAN leaders and delegates [attend](#) the Commemorative Summit for the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation in Tokyo. Prime Minister Kishida [highlighted](#) the importance of ASEAN's vibrant community and its own vision for the Indo-Pacific. He suggests three specific partnerships to elevate the relationship between ASEAN and Japan in the next 50 years: Partners for "Heart to Heart", "Co-creation in

Economy", "Society of the Future", and Peace and Stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

Indo-Pacific Quiz

When did the Gulf of Tonkin incident happen?

- a. 1950
- b. 1964
- c. 1974
- d. 1975

Where is Brass Strait located?

- a. Australia
 - b. Indonesia
 - c. Malaysia
 - d. Philippines
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Consortium Highlights

Bangladesh Elections 2024 Overview by Consortium Member Md. Salman Rahman [Read Here](#)

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