



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 the reply button for your feedback and comments.

ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meet in Laos



*Figure 1: ASEAN Foreign Ministers at the 57th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM) in Vientiane, Lao PDR/
IMAGE/ Asean.org/*

The 57th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting [held](#) in Vientiane, Lao PDR, served as a platform to assess the progress of ASEAN Community-building endeavors and deliberate on matters pertaining to ASEAN's external relations and other significant issues. The leaders reaffirmed their commitment to support Lao PDR's leadership of ASEAN this year under the theme "ASEAN: Enhancing Connectivity and Resilience."

During the leaders' discussions, the focus was on the increasingly violent civil war and humanitarian crisis in Myanmar. They emphasized the need to implement ASEAN's Five-Point Consensus (5PC) to address the problem in the state. Additionally, maritime disputes in the South China Sea were a concern among member states. It is important to note that the existing disputes between China and the Philippines have recently led to confrontations and can raise concerns about the wider conflicts in the region. They reaffirmed to enhance “mutual trust and confidence,” “exercise self-restraint,” to resolve the disputes peacefully. Moreover, on the sidelines of the Meeting, U.S. Secretary Blinken [held meeting](#) with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and stressed continued diplomacy to manage the competition responsibly.'

In addition, the 14th [East Asia Summit](#) (EAS) Foreign Ministers' and the [31st ASEAN Regional Forum](#) (ARF) representatives Meeting convened in Vientiane. The leaders conducted a comprehensive review of EAS cooperation, deliberated on its future trajectory, and engaged in discourse regarding regional and international developments. The

participating nations reiterated their dedication to further fortifying the platform for collaboration on the region's critical strategic, political, and economic matters of mutual interest and concern.

Timor-Leste participated in the meeting as an Observer. The leaders emphasized the importance of Timor-Leste implementing the roadmap for Timor-Leste's Full Membership in ASEAN. [Read More](#)

U.S.-Japan Security Consultative Committee (SCC) in Tokyo

The Secretary of State Blinken, Secretary of Defense Austin, Minister for Foreign Affairs KAMIKAWA, and Minister of Defense KIHARA [convened the U.S.-Japan Security Consultative Committee](#) (SCC) in Tokyo, Japan. The ministers reasserted the enduring commitment of both the United States and Japan to jointly uphold and safeguard the free and open international order underpinned by the rule of law. They further emphasized their intensified collaboration with allies and partners to advance this shared objective. Additionally, the ministers reaffirmed the crucial role of the U.S.-Japan Alliance as the linchpin for peace, security, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond. As per the media report, the ministers agreed that the foreign policy of the People's Republic of China (PRC) aims to reshape the international order to its advantage, potentially at the expense of others.

The U.S. and Japan will also strengthen the military capabilities through extended deterrence that includes upgrading Alliance command and control (C2). The U.S. Defense Secretary said, “The United States will upgrade the U.S. Forces Japan to a joint force headquarters with expanded missions and operational responsibilities.” [Read More](#)

Quad Foreign Ministers Meet in Tokyo

The Foreign Ministers (FMS) of Quadrilateral Security Group (Quad)-Australia, India, Japan, and the Secretary of State of the United States of America [met in Tokyo on July 29th, 2024](#). In a joint statement the Quad FMs showed their staunch support to free and open Indo-Pacific and prevent any threat and use of force to alter the status quo in the region. The leaders expressed their grave concern about the situation of the South and East China Seas and condemn the assertive maneuver in the South China Sea. They reiterated their unwavering support for ASEAN unity and centrality and for the implementation of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP). The leaders emphasized that Quad countries prioritize the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and are fully committed to assisting Pacific Island countries in line with the goals of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent. India will host the Quad Leaders’ Summit 2024 later this year. [Read More](#)

Italy Resets its Relations with China

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni visited China to revamp bi-lateral relations. As Meloni is on her five-day official visit, Italy and China signed a three-year action plan to boost trade and investment between two countries. She met with Chinese Premier Li Qiang and stated, "We certainly have a lot of work to do, and I am convinced that this work can be useful in such a complex phase on a global level and also important at a multilateral level."

It is worth mentioning that Italy withdrew from China's Belt and Road Initiative project in December 2023. However, Italy seeks Chinese investment in trade and investment in manufacturing and auto industry. [Read More](#)

U.S.-India Defense Cooperation Act Proposes to Designate India Like an Ally

U.S. Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL) introduced the U.S.-India Defense Cooperation Act in Congress, which will enhance the strategic partnership at the level of a strategic ally. The proposed legislation aims to elevate India's standing to that of U.S. allies, including Japan, Israel, Korea, and NATO allies, regarding technology transfers. It seeks to grant India a restricted waiver from CAATSA sanctions for the procurement of Russian equipment presently in use by the Indian military. Most

crucially, it will prohibit Pakistan from receiving security assistance if it is found to have sponsored terrorism against India. India has consistently voiced its concerns on various bilateral and multilateral platforms regarding the need to address state-sponsored terrorism along the border. [Read More](#)

Indo-Pacific Quiz

Which country was not among the founding fathers of ASEAN?

- a. Malaysia
- b. Thailand
- c. Indonesia
- d. Brunei Darussalam

Which U.S. Senator has introduced the U.S.-India Defense Cooperation Act?

- a. Susan Collins
 - b. Marco Rubio
 - c. Bernie Sanders
 - d. Chuck Schumer
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