

Chapter 2

Japan's Foreign Policy by Region

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Section 1

Promotion of a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)” Based on the Rule of Law

1 Overview

The Indo-Pacific region, which stretches from the Asia Pacific across the Indian Ocean to the Middle East and Africa, is the core of the world's vitality, supporting more than half of the world's population and possessing high economic potential. At the same time, the region is home to several countries with strong military capabilities, and there have been some ongoing and strengthening acts that shake the very foundations of the international order based on the rule of law. The region also faces a variety of threats, such as piracy, terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, natural disasters, and illegal fishing. It is essential to ensure peace and prosperity in the entire region and beyond, through establishing a free and open order based on the rule of law.

Japan has long emphasized the importance of taking a holistic view of the Indian and Pacific Oceans, as seen in the “Confluence of the Two Seas” speech regarding the Indian and Pacific Oceans delivered by Prime Minister Abe to the Indian Parliament in 2007. In August 2016, this concept was brought to fruition as the “Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)” vision, which Prime Minister Abe announced to the world in his keynote speech at the Sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD VI) in Kenya. In his speech, Prime Minister Abe stated that the key to stability and prosperity of the international community is the dynamism created by combining “Two Continents” — rapidly-growing Asia and potential-filled Africa — and “Two Oceans” — free and open Pacific and Indian Oceans — and that Japan would work to realize prosperity in Asia and Africa.

Furthermore, in March 2023 in India, Prime Minister Kishida announced the New Plan⁽¹⁾ for a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP).” He explained in detail the approach and efforts for FOIP at a historic turning point to achieve the goal of leading the international community toward cooperation rather than division and confrontation.

The new plan clearly emphasizes the importance of “rulemaking through dialogue,” “equal partnership among nations,” and an approach focusing on “human” as the approaches to be taken going forward, while maintaining principles of defending “freedom” and “the rule of law,” and respecting “diversity,” “inclusiveness,” and “openness.” The new plan also clarifies that Japan will strengthen coordination with various countries, expand the networks among countries that share the FOIP vision, and direct efforts in the spirit of co-creation. Furthermore, it sets forth “four pillars” of cooperation for FOIP (Principles for Peace and Rules for Prosperity, Addressing Challenges in an Indo-Pacific Way, Multi-layered Connectivity, and Extending Efforts for Security and Safe Use from the “Sea” to the “Air”).

During this period, Japan has widely promoted efforts to realize FOIP based on the rule of law in cooperation with like-minded countries. As a result, many countries and regions in the international community, including the United States (U.S.), Australia, India, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Republic of Korea (ROK), the European Union (EU), and European countries, share the principles that FOIP emphasizes — “freedom,” “openness,” “diversity,”

(1) For more information on the New Plan for FOIP, see the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website:
https://www.mofa.go.jp/fp/pc/page3e_001336.html



“inclusiveness,” and “the rule of law” — and various consultations and cooperation are advancing toward the realization of FOIP. The U.S., Japan's ally, released its Indo-Pacific Strategy in February 2022, and its “commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific” was reaffirmed in the U.S. National Security Strategy issued in December 2025 following the inauguration of the second Trump administration. Japan and the U.S. also affirmed their commitment to upholding FOIP in the U.S.-Japan Joint Leaders' Statement in February 2025. Furthermore, ASEAN, which is situated in a crucial spot in the Indian and Pacific Oceans and is key to the realization of FOIP, adopted in 2019 the “ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP),” which shares fundamental principles with FOIP, and Japan was among the first to express its full support for the AOIP

to advance FOIP. The Joint Statement adopted at the ASEAN-Japan Summit in October 2025 confirmed the promotion of concrete cooperation contributing to the fundamental principles shared by FOIP and the AOIP. Furthermore, European countries such as the United Kingdom (UK), France, and Germany have formulated their own documents on the Indo-Pacific and expressed their active commitment to the Indo-Pacific region with concrete initiatives in various fields.

In October 2025, Prime Minister Takaichi, in her first policy speech to the Diet since assuming the post of Prime Minister, stated that Japan would continue to vigorously advance FOIP as a pillar of its diplomacy and further evolve it in line with the times, and Japan continues advancing various initiatives under FOIP.

2 Collaboration and Cooperation with Other Countries

In 2025, Japan remained actively engaged in diplomatic activities for the realization of FOIP.

(1) United States (U.S.)

In February, Prime Minister Ishiba made an official visit to the U.S. and held a Japan-U.S. Summit Meeting with President Donald J. Trump in Washington, D.C., where both leaders shared their view on the severe and complex security environment, and concurred to work closely to realize FOIP and to elevate the Japan-U.S. Alliance to new heights.

At the Japan-U.S. Summit Meeting held during President Trump's visit to Japan in October, Prime Minister Takaichi stated that the Japan-U.S. Alliance is the foundation for peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region and emphasized that strengthening the Japan-U.S. Alliance is a top priority in Japan's foreign and security policy, and that Japan is an indispensable partner for the U.S. in the Indo-Pacific region. Prime Minister Takaichi also expressed her determination to continue strongly promoting FOIP as a pillar of Japan's diplomacy and to develop the concept in line with the eras. Additionally, the two leaders affirmed their commitment to work closely together to strongly advance the FOIP. Under this vision, they also affirmed the importance of strengthening regional networks among like-minded partners, such

as Japan-U.S.-ROK, Japan-U.S.-Philippines, and Japan-Australia-India-U.S. (Quad).

In addition, the new National Security Strategy released by the U.S. in December reaffirmed its commitment to FOIP.

Both Japan and the U.S. have confirmed their intention to continue close cooperation toward the realization of FOIP through various opportunities, including Japan-U.S. Foreign Ministers' meetings and U.S.-Japan Dialogue on FOIP.

(2) Japan-Australia-India-U.S. (Quad)

The four countries of Japan, Australia, India, and the U.S. share recognition of the importance of promoting practical cooperation in various fields, including critical and emerging technologies and maritime security, and expanding cooperation to more countries in order to realize FOIP, with the goal of strengthening a rules-based free and open international order. The Quad also fully supports the AOIP and welcomes the proactive efforts by European and other countries toward FOIP. In January, a Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting was held the day after the inauguration of the new U.S. administration, and a joint statement was released reaffirming the shared commitment to strengthening FOIP. In addition, at the Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in

the U.S. in July, the foreign ministers of the four countries reaffirmed their commitment to the realization of FOIP, confirmed that they would promote four priority areas of cooperation, namely maritime and transnational security, economic prosperity and security, critical and emerging technologies, and humanitarian assistance and emergency response, and concurred with continuing practical cooperation that benefits the region.

(3) Japan-U.S.-ROK

As the strategic environment surrounding Japan, the U.S., and the ROK becomes increasingly severe, the three countries have been communicating at multiple levels and strengthening their unity toward the realization of FOIP, holding five foreign ministers' meetings in 2025. At the foreign ministers' meeting in October, the three countries reaffirmed the importance of continuing to show the robust Japan-U.S. and U.S.-ROK alliances and their strategic coordination to realize FOIP. The Joint Statements of the Japan-U.S.-ROK Foreign Ministers issued at the foreign ministers' meetings in February, April, and September have also repeatedly reaffirmed the commitment to maintaining FOIP. In addition, a Japan-U.S.-ROK Trilateral Vice Foreign Ministerial Meeting was held in July, and Japan-U.S.-ROK Trilateral Coordinating Secretariat Meetings have also been held on multiple occasions.

Through these meetings, the three countries have engaged in action-oriented discussions and have delivered concrete initiatives, particularly in the fields of their coordination on North Korea and security, including economic security.

In particular, toward the realization of FOIP, in May, the coast guard agencies of Japan, the U.S., and the ROK jointly provided capacity-building support to ASEAN. In September, the Japan-U.S.-ROK joint exercise Freedom Edge was conducted across multiple domains. In addition, in the field of economic security, the three countries have been advancing efforts toward the protection and promotion of critical and emerging technologies, including by holding the Japan-U.S.-ROK Trilateral Meetings on the Protection of Quantum Technology in September as well as the strengthening of supply chain resilience, including for critical minerals.

(4) India

In August, Prime Minister Ishiba held a summit meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his visit to Japan, stating that Japan and India, which share fundamental values and strategic interests, bear great responsibility for peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region and international society, and that Japan would like to fulfill this responsibility together with Prime Minister Modi. The two leaders affirmed the importance of realizing FOIP.

In addition, under the Takaichi Cabinet, cooperation toward the realization of FOIP was also confirmed at the Japan-India Foreign Ministers' Meeting held on the occasion of the ASEAN-related Summit Meetings in October and the Japan-India Summit Meeting held on the occasion of the G20 Summit in November.

(5) Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

Japan and ASEAN released the Joint Statement of the 23rd ASEAN-Japan Summit on Cooperation on ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific in 2020, confirming that the AOIP and FOIP share fundamental principles. At the time of the announcement of the new plan for FOIP by Prime Minister Kishida in 2023, he emphasized that the AOIP and FOIP are visions that resonate with each other, and at the ASEAN-Japan Summit in September of the same year, the Japan-ASEAN Comprehensive Connectivity Initiative was announced to further strengthen ASEAN's connectivity and promote further regional integration. At the ASEAN-Japan Summit in 2025, Prime Minister Takaichi repositioned FOIP as a pillar of Japan's diplomacy, expressed Japan's intention to evolve it in line with the changes in the times, and in particular to further strengthen collaboration with AOIP to make Japan and ASEAN stronger and more prosperous. Furthermore, at the same meeting, the "Joint Statement of the 28th ASEAN-Japan Summit on Further Promotion and Implementation of the AOIP" was adopted, reaffirming that the AOIP and FOIP share fundamental principles and confirming the promotion and advancement of further cooperation, as well as concurring to implement AOIP projects that contribute to the fundamental principles shared by the AOIP and FOIP. At the East Asia Summit (EAS) held

in the same month, Foreign Minister Motegi, attending on behalf of Prime Minister Takaichi, stated that Japan would further promote concrete cooperation in line with the joint statement on AOIP cooperation.

(6) Australia and New Zealand

With regard to Australia, a joint statement was issued on the occasion of the 12th Japan-Australia 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Consultations (“2+2”) held in September, acknowledging the unprecedented strategic alignment, shared will and capability of Japan and Australia to play a leading role in realizing FOIP that is inclusive and resilient. In addition, in October, Prime Minister Takaichi held a summit meeting with Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and stated that Japan and Australia are like-minded countries with the will and capability to play a leading role in realizing FOIP.

With regard to New Zealand, Foreign Minister Iwaya held a foreign ministers’ meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs Winston Peters in July, and stated that amidst an increasingly severe regional strategic environment, the strengthening of cooperation between the two countries as partners in promoting FOIP was reassuring, and looked forward to enhancing “Strategic Cooperative Partnership.”

(7) Canada

Canada announced its Indo-Pacific Strategy in 2022, and Japan and Canada have been steadily advancing concrete initiatives based on the “Japan-Canada Action Plan for contributing to a free and open Indo-Pacific region.”

In November, Prime Minister Takaichi and Prime Minister Mark Carney concurred on closely cooperating toward the realization of FOIP, on the basis of the “Japan-Canada Action Plan.”

Under the “Japan-Canada Action Plan,” Canada has continuously deployed aircraft and ships to the region to conduct surveillance operations against illicit maritime activities, including ship-to-ship transfers⁽²⁾, and has also dispatched coast guard vessels to carry out missions such as measures against illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

(8) Europe

A The EU

In July, Prime Minister Ishiba held the 30th Japan-EU Summit with President of the European Council António Luís Santos da Costa and President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen. Both sides reaffirmed that the security of the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific regions is inseparable and confirmed that Japan and the EU will closely coordinate with each other in maintaining and strengthening the free and open international order based on the rule of law. In November, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs ERI Arfiya attended the 4th EU Indo-Pacific Ministerial Forum held in Brussels, Belgium, and emphasized that Japan would continue to actively promote FOIP and adapt it to contemporary challenges.

B The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

On the occasion of the NATO Summit held in The Hague, the Netherlands in June, a meeting between NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte and the four Indo-Pacific partners (IP4: Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and the ROK) was held, which Foreign Minister Iwaya attended. At the meeting, views were exchanged on the international security environment, and the importance of concrete cooperation between NATO and the Indo-Pacific partners, including in the field of defense industry, as well as NATO’s expanded engagement with the Indo-Pacific, was confirmed.

C The United Kingdom (UK)

In March, the inaugural meeting of the Japan-UK Economic 2+2 Ministers’ Meeting (“Economic 2+2”) was held, at which ministerial-level discussions were conducted on Japan-UK cooperation in economic security, and both countries reaffirmed that they should remain advocates of a free, open, and rules-based international economic order. From August to September, the UK Carrier Strike Group (CSG25) made port calls in Yokosuka and Tokyo, during which Prime Minister Ishiba inspected the UK aircraft carrier and a Japan-UK Defence Ministers’ Meeting was held. An international

(2) In this context, “ship-to-ship transfers” refers to the transfers to or from North Korea-flagged vessels of any goods or items at sea, which UN Security Council resolution 2375 (adopted in September 2017) prohibits the UN member states from facilitating or engaging in.

symposium entitled “Pacific Future Forum” was also held to discuss strengthening cooperation on security and economic matters in the Indo-Pacific region, at which the defense ministers of Japan and the UK delivered keynote speeches. At the Japan-UK Summit Meeting held in November, Prime Minister Takaichi and Prime Minister Keir Starmer exchanged views on the international situations, including developments in East Asia, and concurred that Japan and the UK would continue to coordinate their efforts on various issues in the international community.

D France

In May, Foreign Minister Iwaya held a Japan-France Foreign Ministers' Meeting with Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Jean-Noël Barrot and confirmed progress in Japan-France cooperation in the security field in the Indo-Pacific region and in cooperation for strengthening the resilience of mineral resource supply chains. In November, Foreign Minister Motegi held a Japan-France Foreign Ministers' Meeting with Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Barrot and discussed close cooperation with France, which is also an Indo-Pacific nation, toward realizing FOIP as well as maintaining and strengthening the free and open international order based on the rule of law. In the same month, Prime Minister Takaichi and President Emmanuel Macron exchanged views and concurred that Japan and France, as “exceptional partners,” sharing the recognition that the security of the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific is inseparable, would continue to closely cooperate in all fields, including security and the economy.

E Germany

Based on Germany's Indo-Pacific guidelines approved by the Cabinet in September 2020, the Government of Germany has been working to strengthen its engagement with the region, and security cooperation between Japan and Germany has further deepened. In August, Minister for Foreign Affairs Johann Wadephul visited Japan and the 1st Japan-Germany Foreign Ministerial Strategic Dialogue was held. Foreign Minister Iwaya stated that Japan welcomed Germany's continued engagement in the Indo-Pacific region through asset deployments and other efforts, and the two foreign

ministers concurred on holding the next Foreign and Defense Ministers' Meeting (“2+2”) at an early date to further materialize bilateral cooperation in the security field. In addition, cooperation through both countries' asset deployments to date and the entry into force of the Japan-Germany Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (Japan-Germany ACSA) further advanced, including the first-ever visit by Japan Air Self-Defense Force F-15 aircraft in September and others to Germany. Furthermore, in November, Prime Minister Takaichi held a meeting with Chancellor Friedrich Merz and stated that Japan would like to cooperate toward the realization of FOIP, given that the security of the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific is inseparable.

F Italy

In March, Prime Minister Ishiba held a Japan-Italy Summit Meeting with President Sergio Mattarella, welcomed the deepening of bilateral cooperation in a wide range of fields including security, and concurred on further strengthening Japan-Italy relations based on the “Japan-Italy Action Plan” announced in 2024. From March to April, the Italian Navy frigate *Antonio Marcegaglia* made port calls in Yokosuka and Osaka and conducted surveillance operations against illicit maritime activities, including ship-to-ship transfers by North Korea-flagged vessels. In May, Prime Minister Ishiba held a Japan-Italy Summit telephone call with President of the Council of Ministers Giorgia Meloni and concurred on further progress on security cooperation, including the Global Combat Air Programme (GCAP), as Italy increases its involvement in the Indo-Pacific. In September, the Japan-Italy Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (Japan-Italy ACSA), which was signed in November 2024, entered into force.

G The Netherlands

In February, Foreign Minister Iwaya held a foreign ministers' meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs Caspar Veldkamp at the Munich Security Conference and concurred on deepening defense cooperation and other areas. In April, Prime Minister Ishiba held a summit meeting with Prime Minister Dick Schoof during his visit to Japan and concurred on cooperating on various global challenges. In June, Foreign Minister Iwaya met with Prime Minister Schoof on the occasion

of the NATO Summit and concurred on commencing negotiations on an Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA). In September, Prime Minister Ishiba held a summit meeting with Prime Minister Schoof on the occasion of the UN General Assembly

and concurred on closely cooperating on urgent international issues. In December, the Japan-Netherlands Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (Japan-Netherlands ACSA) was signed.