

Resources for China-ASEAN Relations

As a research institute based in Singapore, EAI keeps track of developments in relations and interactions between China and the individual countries of Southeast Asia as well as the ASEAN grouping as a whole. Two particular items are presented: (1) chronology of events in China-ASEAN relations, and (2) important documents, such as speeches and agreements. In this inaugural issue of *China: An International Journal*, data and materials are compiled from Jan. to Nov. 2002. From the second issue onwards, the compilation will be done on a six-month basis.

– the Editors

CHINA-ASEAN RELATIONS IN 2002: CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

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JANUARY

- 4th Nong Duc Manh, secretary general of the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP) tells visiting Chinese judicial officials that the two countries should increase exchanges on fighting crime, particularly corruption.
- Vietnam and China inaugurate hydrofoil service between Hai Phong and China's Guangxi Autonomous Region.
- 7th China announces the first annual meeting between provincial narcotics and law-enforcement officials of China and Vietnam in the highland areas of the countries' common border. They agree to crack down on narcotics trafficking and related crime.
- Thai media report that the Thai government asked Taiwan to cancel a planned visit to Bangkok by Vice President Annette Lu Hsiu-lien of Taiwan.
- 8th Cambodian senate president Chea Sim and National Assembly president Norodom Ranariddh meet Nie Ronggui, visiting chairman of the Sichuan Provincial People's Political Consultative Conference (PPCC). Prince Ranariddh promises Cambodia will continue adopting the "one China" policy.

- 9th Singapore's Trade Development Board announces the largest ever Singaporean business mission to Beijing and Shandong, seeking business opportunities in the 2008 Beijing Olympics.
- 14th The Vietnamese government awards the Order of Achievement, Second Class, to its garrison on Truong Sa Lon (Big Truong Sa) Island in the Spratly archipelago, and announces measures to improve life for the soldiers and officers stationed there.
- 20–23rd Wang Zhongyu, state councilor and secretary general of the State Council of the PRC, leads a goodwill delegation to Myanmar. They meet Lt. Gen. Khin Nyunt, first secretary of the State Peace and Development Council.
- 24th Li Peng, chairman of China's National People's Congress (NPC), meets Cambodia's King Norodom Sihanouk and Queen Monineath, who are visiting China for medical check-ups.
- 28th China announces it is renovating the house in the Guangxi Autonomous Region where Vietnamese communist leader Ho Chi Minh lived for a year (1943–4), after his release by the Kuomintang. When completed it will be a cultural relic, open to tourists.
- 29–31st The 4th official Chinese delegation, led by Luo Zhaohui, deputy director general of the Asia Affairs Development of the PRC Foreign Ministry, makes a 10-day visit to Myanmar.
- 29th Indroko, Indonesia navy chief of staff, meets Chinese defence minister Chi Haotian in Beijing and tells him the Indonesian armed forces hope to further relations with the People's Liberation Army (PLA), particularly the navy.
- 30th *Jane's Defense Weekly* reports that China will for the first time send observers to the annual Thai–Singapore–U.S. Cobra Gold exercise in Thailand in May. China, which had appeared ready to accept the invitation last year until the April EP-3 incident, will join 13 other Asia-Pacific nations in sending observers.

FEBRUARY

- 4th President Jiang Zemin and Premier Zhu Rongji hold talks with visiting Laos prime minister Bounngang Vorachit.
- Defence Minister Chi meets Duoangchay Pichit, Laos defence minister, who tells Chi that Laos hopes to learn from the PLA and promote cooperation between the two armed forces.
- 11th A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman says China is “very concerned” about the arrest of 95 Chinese fishermen by the Philippine Navy between 31 Jan. and 1 Feb. near Scarborough Shoal in the South China Sea. Philippine sources say the fishermen were caught blast-fishing. They were later released.
- 28th Jiang Zemin makes a speech at Hanoi National University. He meets General Secretary Nong Duc Manh of the VCP, President Tran Duc Luong, Chairman Nguyen Van An of the Vietnamese National Assembly, former general secretaries of the VCP Central Committee Do Muoi and Le Kha Phieu.

MARCH

- 3rd Indonesian police withdraw a permit for *Falun Gong* followers to stage a march through central Jakarta. Chinese Embassy officials tell the press that they had requested the ban because *Falun Gong* is an “evil cult.”
- 11th Taiwan announces that a mission from its Ministry of Economic Affairs won orders totalling \$286 million during visits to Thailand and Vietnam.
- 21–22nd Crown Prince Al-Muhtadee Billah of Brunei meets Jiang Zemin and Vice President Hu Jintao on his first visit to China.
- 23rd Hanoi releases trade figures indicating that tariffs on Vietnamese exports to China have been reduced by an average of 27%. Vietnam earns close to \$2 billion exporting agricultural and primary products and light manufactures to China, many of which have benefited from tariff reductions. Vietnam imports steel, automotive products, chemicals, and consumer commodities from China.
- 24th Jiang Zemin holds talks with President Megawati Sukarnoputri of Indonesia.
- 25th China announces that Shanghai Airlines will open direct flights between Shanghai and Ho Chi Minh City.
- Hu Jintao, Li Peng, and Zhu Rongji meet President Megawati.

APRIL

- 3rd Li Ruihuan, chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese PPCC, informs a Philippine-China Council for the Promotion of Peaceful Reunification delegation that all Chinese people worldwide have a historical responsibility to realise the peaceful reunification of both sides of the Taiwan Straits and thanks Philippine citizens of Chinese origin for their contribution.
- 8th On his visit to Beijing, Deputy Prime Minister Pham Gia Khiem of Vietnam asks China to expand its assistance to Vietnam’s programmes in agriculture, industry, and medicine.
- 9th Thailand’s largest commercial bank announces it is expanding its operations in China to take advantage of the expected liberalisation of financial services as a result of China’s WTO membership. Bangkok Bank projects that its Chinese operations may contribute 30% of its total overseas income within several years.
- 12th Zhu Rongji meets Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra of Thailand.
- 13th Zhu Rongji meets Deputy Prime Minister Nguyen Manh Cam of Vietnam.
- 14th The Vietnamese deputy prime minister tours Hainan and Guangdong Provinces after attending the Boao Forum.
- 14–22nd Chairman Nguyen Van An of the Vietnamese National Assembly visits China at the invitation of Li Peng. He tells Vice Premier Li Lanqing that Vietnam will push bilateral friendship to a new high.
- 15th PetroChina, China’s largest oil company, announces it will pay \$216 million for the Indonesian oil and gas operations of Devon Energy Corporation.

- 18th Chi Haotian meets Philippine Secretary of Defense Angelo Reyes, who tells him the government of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo will strictly abide by the “one China” policy.
- 23rd Deputy Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi of Malaysia meets Hu Jintao on a ceremonial occasion.
- 24th Two Singapore navy ships visit Kaohsiung in Taiwan after exercises with Taiwan’s Navy.
- 25th Hu Jintao holds talks with several Malaysian leaders: the Yang Dipertuan Agong (Supreme Head of State) Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Putra Jamalullail, Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, and the deputy prime minister.
- 26th Hu Jintao meets the Yang di Pertuan (ruler) of the Malaysian state Penang.
- Hu Jintao meets Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong of Singapore.
- 27th Hu Jintao meets Singapore Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew, President S. R. Nathan, and Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong.

MAY

- 10th Finance ministers of ASEAN Plus Three — China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea — hold their 5th meeting in Shanghai.
- 13th China’s Minister of Foreign Trade Shi Guangsheng visits Vietnam.
- 14–28th Chinese officers join observers from 17 other nations at the annual US-Thai-Singapore “Cobra Gold” military exercise.
- 15th A Special Working Group on the Singapore–Kunming rail link meets in Rangoon, announces a feasibility study which had examined six routes, and recommends one that would transit Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos, with an additional section that would integrate Myanmar into the network.
- 17th China’s Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan, en route to East Timor’s independence day celebration, meets his Indonesian counterpart Hassan Wirayuda, and President Megawati.
- 19th Tang Jiaxuan holds talks with senior minister for foreign affairs cooperation in the East Timor transitional government.
- 21st With 900,000 registered drug addicts — mostly on heroin — and an addict population up to eight times that number, China opens a three-day meeting in Beijing with representatives of Myanmar, Cambodia, China, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, and UN representatives, and calls for stronger measures to fight narcotics production and trafficking.
- 22nd Following a meeting in Bali, Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister Wang Yi announces that China is ready to cooperate with ASEAN countries to make the South China Sea secure.

People’s Daily reports that the Philippines “has again been playing new tricks” in the South China Sea, by planning to extend its continental shelf from 200 nautical miles to 350 and intensifying the “fierce and crude” arrest and detention of Chinese fishermen and boats.

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS IN 2002

- 23rd Two ships of the Chinese PLA Navy call at Changi Naval Base in Singapore on the Chinese navy's first round-the-world voyage. *People's Daily* reports that the ships, a missile destroyer and supply ship, later conduct anti-piracy exercises in the Straits of Malacca.

JUNE

- 3rd Fifteen Chinese "youth volunteers," the first such peace corps-like contingent sent to any country by China, arrive in Lang Son Province in June in Vietnam to help Vietnamese doctors provide medical care.
- 4th A delegation led by chief of the VCP Internal Affairs Department Truong Vinh holds talks in Beijing on legal reform, countering corruption, and party building.
- 6-7th China holds the first China-ASEAN Seminar on Trade, Investment, and Development Cooperation in Kunming, with more than 400 participants from 10 ASEAN countries and China.
- 8th Senior officials open a session of the Great Mekong Subregion Cooperation Meeting in Kunming. The meeting was initiated by the Asian Development Bank, China, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam in 1992.
- 17th Commander of the Philippine Air Force Benjamin Defensor meets Qiao Qingchen, commander of the PLA Air Force.
- 19th Li Peng meets a delegation from the Thai Parliament.
- 20th China announces that many of the nearly 300,000 refugees it has accepted since the late 1970s have come from Vietnam. (China invaded Vietnam in 1979, and the Vietnamese government subsequently expelled large numbers of its Sino-Vietnamese citizens to China and other countries.) Beijing quoted a spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees as saying that the Vietnamese are well integrated in Chinese society. The occasion is World Refugee Day, and the announcement may have been intended to deflect criticism for China's treatment of North Koreans fleeing into China.
- 21st A visiting military delegation led by the commander of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF) Jaafar Aziz meets senior Chinese military leaders including Zhang Wannian, vice chairman of the Central Military Commission. Fu Quanyou, chief of staff of the PLA, reportedly tells Jaafar that China is willing to develop military ties with the RBAF.
- 22nd The first visit by Philippine Navy ships to the PRC begins with the arrival of two vessels in Shanghai for a five-day visit.
- 25th Defence Minister Chi meets the supreme commander of the Royal Thai Armed Forces Narong Yuthavong in Beijing.

JULY

- 4th Indonesia announces it will sign an agreement with China to curb the rampant smuggling of cut logs that is reducing its forests. Illegal Indonesian sawmills have reportedly turned to shipping cut timber as a way of circumventing bilateral agreements designed to protect the environment.
- 8th China announces it will send 1,000 Sichuanese rabbits to Thailand as part of a poverty elimination programme to replace “inferior Thai rabbits” that generate poor returns.
- Vietnam’s trade minister Vu Khoan tells Zhang Xuewen, deputy governor of Guangxi Autonomous Region, that Vietnam will strengthen cooperation with Guangxi.
- 10th The Philippines opens a Consulate General in Shanghai.
- 11th East Timor foreign minister Jose Ramos Horta describes China as his new country’s “closest possible ally,” noting that East Timor wants China’s friendship as an “economic powerhouse,” and will not lecture Beijing on human rights violations.
- Indonesian businesspeople establish an Indonesia-China Business Council in Jakarta to strengthen trade ties between the two countries, and to promote a more favourable trade balance for Indonesia, which is concerned that inexpensive Chinese imports are driving Indonesia enterprises out of business.
- 17th Prime Minister Mahathir bin Mohamad meets visiting vice chairman of the Chinese NPC Jiang Chunyun, and tells him that Malaysia will continue to pursue its foreign policy of friendship and cooperation with China. Jiang expressed appreciation for Mahathir’s role in promoting cooperation within the framework of ASEAN, the ASEAN Plus One and ASEAN Plus Three forums.
- Xinhua announces that Thailand is negotiating to participate in the construction of a 5.5 million kilowatts hydroelectric project in Yunnan. The plan is to share the power produced by the dam among Guangdong and Yunnan Provinces in China and Thailand.
- 18th Chi Haotian receives a senior delegation from the Laos People’s Army. Chi notes that the two countries still help each other, and also carry out close cooperation in national and military construction.
- China and the Philippines exchange accusations of unfair trade practices at a meeting of the Philippine–China Joint Trade Committee. Both sides subsequently agree to improve the bilateral trade and investment structure through complementary product diversification and intensified two-way investments. They also discuss a proposed Manila-Clark railway system, which Chinese firms may build under a concessionary loan.
- 21st Myanmar announces that it has opened three border trading points with China. According to Myanmar, the value of border trade increased 25% in 2001 over 2000.

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS IN 2002

- 22nd China announces the implementation of agreements with the Philippines to combat transnational crime and drug trafficking. The Philippines has been concerned about the large quantities of “*shabu*” (methamphetamines) entering the country from China. *Shabu* is the most abused drug in the Philippines.
- 26th China lifts the ban on travel to the Philippines that has been in place since Aug. 2001, following the kidnappings of Chinese nationals, some of whom were murdered. Philippine consular officials have been instructed to streamline visa procedures to encourage more Chinese tourists to visit the country. Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon states that the Philippines “must take advantage of the Chinese tourist market, as it is the largest growing market in the world.”
- 31st Chinese sources state that Beijing will invest \$360 million to improve a 97-km section of the road linking Kunming (Yunnan Province) and Bangkok.

AUGUST

- 1st Tang Jiaxuan met with his Vietnamese counterpart Nguyen Dy Nien.
- 9th The Malaysian naval ship Kd Sriinderapura arrives in Shanghai for a five-day goodwill visit.
- Li Ka-shing’s Hutchison Whampoa (Hong Kong) and Singapore Technologies Telemedia (STT) close in on bankrupt Global Crossing with a joint bid of \$450 million to \$500 million in cash and notes for 62% of the company. Hutchison and STT had offered \$750 million for 79% of Global Crossing in January, but that deal fell through because some creditors thought the bid was too low. Global Crossing filed for bankruptcy protection in the United States in January.
- 14th Myanmar officials and representatives of the China Yunnan Corporation sign an agreement on the construction of jute-based paper mills in northern Myanmar.
- Thailand announces that it plans to network its textile industry with that of China, starting with links to “Underwear City,” a huge manufacturing base for undergarments, in Guangdong Province.
- 14–15th Taiwan’s Vice President Annette Lu visited Jakarta for two days, despite what Taiwan said were Beijing’s efforts to stop her. Promises to buy large amounts of liquefied natural gas from Indonesia may have smoothed the path for Lu’s visit. But Jakarta issued a statement saying it has “long-recognised Chinese Taipei as an integral part of the PRC.”
- 21st Indonesia’s Department of Immigration calls for reinstatement of tighter entry requirements for Chinese citizens, many of whom reportedly came on tourist visas but are engaged in business. Constraints on Chinese visitors were relaxed after the resignation of President Suharto in 1998.
- 22–25th China and Vietnam hold round of border talks in Kunming (Yunnan Province).

SEPTEMBER

- 3rd Bangkok formally apologises to Taipei for mishandling the visa application of the Island's labour minister, who had planned a visit to witness the signing of an agreement meant to improve working conditions for Thais in Taiwan.
- Li Peng meets former Thai Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai, and tells him China wishes to learn from Thailand how to manage its participation in the World Trade Organisation. Li states that China is pleased that a Thai, Dr Supachai Panithchpakdi, has taken over as WTO director general. Chuan thanks Li for China's refusal to devalue its currency during the Asian financial crisis.
- 4th Meeting King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand and Princess Sirindhorn at the royal palace at Hua Hin, Li Peng commends Thailand's treatment of its ethnic Chinese subjects. The Thai monarch tells Li that he has encouraged members of his family to visit China to increase mutual understanding and friendship between the two peoples. In his meeting with Prime Minister Thaksin, Li announces the gift of a pair of pandas to the Thai nation to commemorate the birthdays of the King and Queen. Thaksin reaffirms Thailand's adherence to the "one China" policy.
- Zhu Rongji meets Thai Princess Chulabhorn.
- 8–12th Li Peng visits Indonesia.
- 11th Hu Jintao meets Phan Dien, a member of the Political Bureau of the VCP Central Committee. Hu urges Vietnam and China to "earnestly push forward bilateral friendship and cooperation in the new century." Dien also meets Chinese Vice Premier Qian Qichen.
- Indonesia announces that it will hold the first meeting of a China–Indonesia Energy Forum in Bali later in the month. Top leaders of China's public energy sector are expected to come to discuss cooperation in the power sector, coal production, development of a gas pipeline linking East Kalimantan and East Java, and a \$400 million Chinese soft loan to develop a power plant in Sumatra.
- 12–15th Li Peng visits the Philippines.
- 14th China warns Singapore of "trouble" if it establishes a Free Trade Agreement with Taiwan.
- 16th A press release following the conclusion of the Sixth China–Malaysia Economic and Trade Commission meeting in Kuala Lumpur states that total trade between the two countries from Jan. to Jul. this year stands at \$7.4 billion, making Malaysia China's largest trading partner among the ASEAN countries.
- 17–20th Lee Kuan Yew visits Taiwan.
- 22nd Zhu Rongji, meeting with Thai Prime Minister Thaksin on the margins of the Fourth Asia–Europe Summit in Copenhagen, says that cooperation between the two countries has achieved remarkable results.
- 25th China's chief of general staff Fu Quanyou meets Cambodia's acting head of state, Senate President Chea Sim, and Prime Minister Hun Sen. Fu also meets Cambodia's Co-Ministers of Defence Tea Banh and Prince Sisowath Sirirath.

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS IN 2002

- 25–28th Chi Haotian visits the Philippines.
- 26th Indonesia's state-owned Pertamina signs a \$8.5-billion contract to develop the Tangguh natural-gas field in the remote eastern province of Papua and supply gas to a planned terminal in Fujian Province across Taiwan. The Tangguh field project suffered a setback less than two months ago when China chose a consortium of gas suppliers drilling in Australia to supply \$13 billion worth of natural gas to Guangdong Province.

OCTOBER

- 24th Tang Jiaxuan meets Secretary of Foreign Relations of Mexico and Indonesia Minister.
- 27th Jiang Zemin meets President Megawati.

NOVEMBER

- 4th At the 8th ASEAN summit, China and the 10-member ASEAN sign four agreements — on free trade, cooperation in such areas as drug trafficking, agricultural cooperation and a landmark declaration on territorial disputes in the South China Sea. The agreement on economic cooperation, which will come into force in 1 Jul. 2003, would potentially cover 1.7 billion consumers and involve two-way annual trade of \$1.2 trillion. China and ASEAN together will make the world's biggest free trade area.
- 12th Lin Yi-fu, Taiwan economic minister, leads a 27-member delegation to Malaysia on a two-day visit as part of a tour of Southeast Asia. Lin proposes establishing a Free Trade Agreement with the 10-member ASEAN nations. In response, his Malaysian counterpart, Rafidah Aziz, suggests that the island take up the issue with the ASEAN secretariat.

This chronology of events in China-ASEAN relations was sourced mainly from *Comparative Connections: An E-Journal on East Asian Bilateral Relations* <<http://www.csis.org/pacfor/cc/>>; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, People's Republic of China <<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/c492.html>> (all accessed Jan. 2003); and *Far Eastern Economic Review*.