



Consortium of Indo-Pacific  
Researchers

## **Indo-Pacific Weekly Mail September 29-October 5, 2025**

---

Greetings Colleagues,

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

### **Japan's Ruling Party Elects its New Leader**



Figure 1: Sanae Takaichi, who has elected the leader of ruling LDP in Japan

Japan's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) [has elected it new leader Sanae Takaichi](#) and set to be the first female Prime Minister of Japan. While Japan celebrates seeing a female to its highest office, first time in 80 years of the country's history, Takaichi seems to have a rough road ahead due to tumultuous global politics. As a key ally of the United States in the Indo-Pacific region and a member of the Quad, Japan continues to navigate issues related to tariffs and increase in defense spending introduced by the US administration. Takaichi is tasked with establishing Japan's defense and economic policies to align with the evolving security dynamics in the Indo-Pacific region.

Notably, Notably, Takaichi served as economic security minister and held several ministerial positions under former PM Shinzo Abe and Fumio Kishida. She has a diverse range of experiences in governance and politics. Further known as ultra conservative, she is a proponent of former Prime Minister Abe and has long been recognized for her support of high government spending, amendments to constitutional provisions, a tough stance on China, and a large defense budget.

In reality, focusing on geopolitical priorities, she may seek to elevate Japan's prominence within diplomatic discussions in Washington and the Indo-Pacific region. The upcoming Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit, scheduled for the end of October, and President Trump's potential visit to the region will provide Takaichi with an opportunity to meet with Trump and neighboring leaders, including China. Following Abe's footsteps, she is

expected to take a prominent role in highlighting Japan's dynamism and its significant role in fulfilling US interests as she meets with Trump. The fond memories of Abe and Trump can energize relations between Washington and Tokyo, unlike those of his predecessor, Ishiba, even amid ongoing discussions about tariffs and burden-sharing.

The cautionary note for Takaichi is not to take an aggressive approach toward China and North Korea, as Trump is expected to meet these leaders in the region. The White House is actively promoting President Trump's image as a peacemaker, emphasizing the importance of diplomatic engagement.

---

## **China and North Korea Hold Diplomatic Talks**

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with visiting North Korean counterpart Choe Son Hui in Beijing. Both leaders aim to [strengthen bilateral relations](#). This is the second high-level meeting between China and North Korea within a month, following the summit in Beijing between the top leaders of both countries, Xi Jinping and Kim Jong Un. Xi invited Kim to the massive Victory Day parade, which was also attended by Russian leader Vladimir Putin.

It is worth noting that China resists US hegemony in the region and beyond and accuses the US of adopting the "Cold War mentality." Now, China has formed a coalition with North Korea and Russia to counter the US-led international order. The US considers that China, North Korea, and Russia "conspire" against the US and seek to alter the status quo.

North Korea has also [enhanced its military ties with Russia](#), and North Korean leader have reportedly deployed troops to support Russian operations in Ukraine. Despite President Trump's meeting with Putin in Alaska and repeated diplomatic efforts to end the Ukraine War, Putin has not agreed to any peace plan for the Ukraine crisis.

---

## **Japan and US Conduct Resolute Dragon Exercise**

The U.S. Marines and Sailors from the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) recently showcased their combat readiness and lethal capabilities alongside troops from the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF) Western Army during the Resolute Dragon 25 Exercise. This exercise reinforced the U.S.-Japan alliance as a “critical deterrent” against aggression in the Indo-Pacific region. The exercise focused on validating forward command-and-control operations and bolstering bilateral cooperation, showcasing the MEB's ability to rapidly deploy and dominate any contested environment alongside its JGSDF allies.

The MEB’s deployment demonstrated the ability to quickly shift from planning to action, highlighting the importance of joint rehearsals for U.S. and Japanese forces to effectively respond to emerging challenges. The officials explained that the exercise is effective in helping troops maintain high-energy operations in forward-deployed areas. US Marine media news states "Resolute Dragon 25 highlighted the strength of the U.S.-Japan alliance and reaffirmed 3d MEB’s role as a rapidly deployable, combat-credible, and consistently lethal

force in the Indo-Pacific region. 3d Marine Expeditionary Brigade maintains a persistent forward presence in the Pacific theater strengthening alliances in unwavering support of U.S. national security strategy." [Read More](#)

---

## **Australia and Brunei Enhance Defense Partnership**

Australia bolsters its defense relations with Brunei Darussalam as Royal Australian Air Force deployed its two F-35A Lightning II aircraft landed for the first time. The deployment serves as a static exhibition of fifth-generation aircraft and represents an important milestone in the comprehensive partnership between Australia and the Southeast Asian nation. Australian High Commissioner to Brunei Darussalam Michael Hoy said, "Australia is committed to working with Brunei Darussalam through ASEAN-led mechanisms to promote an Indo-Pacific region that is peaceful, stable, resilient, prosperous and rules-based."

Australia and Brunei maintain a comprehensive partnership and collaborate trade, maritime security, climate, education, intelligence sharing. Recently, the Royal Australian Navy and the Royal Brunei Navy have completed Exercise Penguin, a bilateral maritime security activity aimed at building interoperability and strengthening partnerships. [Read More](#)

---

## **Indo-Pacific Quiz**

In which Asian country is a female leader set to be the Prime Minister?

- a. South Korea
- b. China
- c. Japan
- d. Nepal

Which European nation held Brunei Darussalam as a protectorate until 1984?

- a. Britain
- b. Germany
- c. Japan
- d. France

---

## Consortium Highlights

- ❖ Upcoming Podcast: Examining U.S. Grand Strategy and Euro-Atlantic Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, Oct. 27, 2025 @10:30 AM EST
- ❖ CIPR Welcomes Fall 2025 Interns

---

## Indo-Pacific Quiz Key

Here are the **Answers** for Sept. 28 Newsletter Quiz

Q. The United States has paused military aid to which country?

- b. Taiwan

Q. Which was the last Dynasty of Vietnam?

- c. Nguyễn Dynasty

---

Contributions: Indu Saxena