



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.

South Korean President Visits China, Aiming at Restoration of Ties



Figure 1 South Korean President Lee Jae-myung and Chinese president Xi Jinping during the summit in Beijing
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South Korean President Lee Jae-myung made his first State visit to China and met President Xi Jinping, hoping to stabilize the peace in the region. The summit between the two leaders was focused on "comprehensive restoration" of South Korea-China relations for growth and the peace of their people.

Two leaders [signed 14 Memorandum of Understandings \(MoUs\)](#) for cooperation in expanding supply chains, revitalizing local economies through local industry, silver, healthcare, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, and climate change. Furthermore, to address the low birth rate and aging population in both countries, leaders agreed to promote child welfare programs.

It is worth noting that the joint statement was not released during the meeting between Lee and Xi. However, the regional security issues, such as peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and the West Sea, were discussed. South Korea and China have a maritime dispute in the West Sea, and China has built large structures in the Yellow Sea's Provisional Measures Zone (PMZ). The PMZ is the area where the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of South Korea and China overlap. China calls these structures for marine farming and environmental monitoring purposes. However, there has consistently been concern about the potential dual use of these structures by China, encompassing both civilian and military uses. In this regard, the two countries agreed to hold boundary demarcation talks and to foster an understanding of coexistence and peace in the disputed territory.

Also, China is willing to be a mediator between South Korea and North Korea to bring peace and stability to the Korean Peninsula. South Korean leader Lee wants China to push for the gradual denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. However, North Korea launched ballistic missiles, conveying a clear message to Seoul and Beijing, potentially influencing discussions regarding denuclearization.

Additionally, geopolitical tensions are escalating between China and Japan following Japanese Prime Minister Takaichi's remarks that Japan may use military force against China if there is a Chinese attack on Taiwan. Now, China has imposed new export controls on rare earth exports to Japan, citing the material's use in Japanese militarism.

US Sphere of Influence, First Strike in Western Hemisphere

The US strike in Venezuela and the capture of President Nicolas Maduro and his wife on charges of narco-trafficking demonstrate the Trump administration's strategy of US dominance in the Western Hemisphere. President Trump displayed his national security strategy's approach of a Sphere of Influence to eradicate foreign influence and crack down on the profiteering networks of adversaries in the US backyard.

Venezuela has long been an ally of Russia and China, has been exporting a large amount of oil to these countries. Some analysts and US

officials state that the US strike against Venezuela is intended to counter China's influence and to end the leverage by buying cheap oil. On the other hand, China condemned the US strike on Venezuela and referred to it as "illegal" and a "bullying act." However, the question arises: would a US strike in Venezuela stop China's influence in South America? Additionally, how would US action embolden China in its sphere of influence, particularly regarding Taiwan?

The US military operation in Venezuela reflects the Trump Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, as outlined in the National Security Strategy 2025. It remains unclear which country might be next and what the implications would be. [Read More](#)

BRICS Plus Countries Begin Naval Exercise “Will for Peace 2026”

China, Russia, and Iran commence the joint naval exercises in South Africa's waters in what the host country described as a BRICS Plus operation to "ensure the safety of shipping and maritime economic activities." India is not participating in the China-led BRICS Plus exercise.

The expanded BRICS group also includes Egypt, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, and the United Arab Emirates.

South Africa's military said in a statement, "Exercise WILL FOR PEACE 2026 bring together navies from BRICS Plus countries for ... joint maritime safety operations (and) interoperability drills."

The joint exercise began after the US strike on Venezuela, and there are reports that the US may attack Iran if the number of protesters' deaths continues to rise. [Read More](#)

Military Junta Holds General Elections in Myanmar

The Myanmar military regime has held general elections in a civil war-torn country after five years of repressive military rule. The military ruler ousted the civilian government led by democratic leader Aung San Suu Kyi in 2021. Since the military coup in 2021, Myanmar has engulfed in civil unrest and democratic protests.

The international observer and expert say that without any strong opposition, a free and fair election is not possible. It is worth noting that the National League for Democracy (NLD), led by Aung San Suu Kyi, won the 2020 elections but has been dissolved, along with numerous other opposition parties, for failing to register for the most recent polls. Additionally, various rebel groups have declined participation. [Read More](#)

Indo-Pacific Quiz

How many international organizations will the US plan leave in rejection of the "globalist agenda"?

- a. 63
- b. 65
- c. 64
- d. 66

In which country has the US military conducted "Operation Absolute Resolve"?

- a. Afghanistan
- b. Venezuela
- c. Iran
- d. Syria

Consortium Highlights

- ❖ Webinar on US Sphere of Influence and Indo-Pacific
- ❖ Upcoming Election in Bangladesh and Geopolitics of South Asia

Indo-Pacific Quiz Key

Here are the **Answers** for December 28 Newsletter Quiz

Q. When did Japan normalize its relations with People's Republic of China (PRC)?

- d. 1972

Q. Which context is the "Meiji Restoration" most associated with?

d. political and economic reform in Japan

Contributions: Indu Saxena