



Consortium of Indo-Pacific

Researchers

Indo-Pacific Weekly Mail May 4-May 10, 2026

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 Leaders Emphasize Energy Security amid Iran War Chaos



Figure 1: ASEAN Leaders during the opening ceremony of the 48th ASEAN summit in Cebu, Philippines, May 8, 2026.

Manila hosted 48th summit of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) amid the region's exposure to energy shocks due to Iran war. ASEAN leaders expressed concerns over trade, investment, energy, and food security that is hugely dependent on exports from other countries. The leaders of the group gather in Cebu Island - a group of more than 150 smaller surrounding islands and islets. The entire region is hugely impacted by the Iran war. The Chair urged the countries for a mechanism on ASEAN Framework Agreement on Petroleum Security (APSA) to bring into force as soon as possible, enhancing regional preparedness, coordination mechanisms, implementation arrangements, and minimizing exposure to supply disruption through timely information sharing. The leaders intend to strengthen contingency planning, development and adoption of coordinated emergency response mechanisms. The leaders expressed hope to find a peaceful resolution of the war within UN Charter and International Law and appreciate the effort of mediating party.

Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. advised Thailand and Cambodia to resolve the border issue peacefully. He anticipates Myanmar's government to grant the request of the Special Envoy of ASEAN Chair for Myanmar. Philippines appreciated Myanmar's decision to transfer democracy leader Daw Aung San Su ki to house arrest and the partial reduction of her prison.

The leaders also reaffirmed ASEAN's commitment to maintaining an open, inclusive, transparent, and rules-based regional architecture, anchored

in ASEAN Centrality and guided by the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP), through ASEAN-led mechanisms.

ASEAN is a group of 11 countries, namely Brunei Darussalam, Myanmar, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, and Timor-Leste. [Read More](#)

India Marks One Year of Operation Sindoor

In retaliation of the Pahalgam terror attack, [India launched Operation Sindoor](#) on May 7, 2025, and carried out a strike on terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, which led to a four-day war between India and Pakistan. India's Defense Minister Rajnath Singh stated that the operation successfully neutralized more than 100 terrorists and eliminated several facilities associated with Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed, and Hizbul Mujahideen.

India demonstrated its military and strategic capabilities by effectively neutralizing terrorist elements in a neighboring country. The operation signified a doctrinal shift, as India declared that subsequent acts of terrorism would be regarded as acts of war, thereby redefining the boundaries between terrorist organizations and their state sponsors. This initiative established new standards for response, highlighting the importance of swift, precise, and proportionate measures against terrorism.

Operation Sindoor established a new precedent for addressing cross-border terrorism. However, security between the two nuclear-armed rivals remains fragile, especially given the frequent deployment of drones and missile systems. [Read More](#)

India and Vietnam Expand Ties

Vietnam Prime Minister To Lam's visit to New Delhi is significant as India and Vietnam upgrade bilateral partnership to "Enhanced Strategic Partnership." Vietnam and India agreed to deep cooperation in defense, technology, and trade. The two sides agreed to enhance cooperation and elevate bilateral trade and investment with a new trade goal of 25 billion USD by 2030.

India has extended the defense credit line for Vietnam. India also offers training to Vietnamese defense personnel under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme, towards capacity building. Talks have been held between senior officials about [Vietnam buying BrahMos Hypersonic Missiles from India](#). The missile is a joint Indian Russian production.

Vietnam can be a crucial partner in maritime security, trade, and investment, as India's "Act East policy" promotes cooperation with the Southeast Asian nations. [Read More](#)

Japan and Indonesia Sign Defense Pact

Japanese Defense Minister Shinjiro Koizumi signed the [Defense Cooperation Arrangement \(DCA\)](#) with his Indonesian counterpart Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin in Jakarta. The two Ministers agreed to further promote mutually beneficial bilateral defense cooperation and contribute to the peace and stability of both countries and the region. The agreement expanded to the 2015 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which seeks to further advance bilateral defense cooperation that includes joint training, maritime security, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR), and defense equipment and technology cooperation. The two countries intend to develop the "Integrated Defense Dialogue Mechanism" that will lead to expanding defense cooperation at various levels.

Furthermore, Indonesia expresses its interest in buying Japan's used submarine destroyer and other defense equipment. After scrapping the ban on exporting lethal weapons, Japan can be a major defense supplier to the Southeast Asian countries. Indonesia has a territorial dispute with China in the South China Sea and seeks its presence around Natuna Island, an archipelago at the southern reaches of the contested sea. Where China establishes its claim with its Nine dash line. In April 2026, Indonesia and the US signed a "Major Defense Cooperation Partnership" (MDCP). [Read More](#)

Indo-Pacific Quiz

Which Asian country is US President Trump scheduled to visit from May 14-15?

- a. China
- b. India
- c. Japan
- d. Pakistan

China has eliminated tariffs for all African countries, except for?

- a. Sudan
 - b. Nigeria
 - c. Estwini
 - d. Botswana
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Consortium Highlights

- ❖ [Video Recording](#) Book-Talk **Japan's Grand Strategy: Liminal Power in an Uncertain World**, May 4, 2026, 9:00 AM EST
 - ❖ Upcoming podcast on **Meiji Japan and what it teaches about rising Asian powers**, May 11, 9:00 AM EST
 - ❖ [Blogpost](#): How the Iran War is Reorienting the Indo-Pacific Security Arrangements
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Indo-Pacific Quiz Key

Here are the **Answers** for May 3, 2026, Newsletter Quiz

Q. Why does Japan's Yasukuni Shrine create diplomatic strain between Japan and its neighboring countries (China and South Korea)?

b. Enshrines war criminals from WWII

Q. Which country exited Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)?

b. United Arab Emirates

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