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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.

Modi's Three Nations Tour, Seeks to Strengthen Strategic Partnership



Figure 1: Indian Prime Minister Modi and Australian Prime Minister Albanese in Melbourne/IMAGE/ Instagram/News/

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has traversed three strategically consequential Asian nations — Indonesia, Australia, and New Zealand — to fortify and deepen bilateral strategic partnerships across the Indo-Pacific's most pivotal relationships. On his visit to Indonesia, Modi and his counterpart, Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto, [inked 14 landmark agreements](#) spanning defense, critical minerals, and maritime security. Most notably, Indonesia and India concluded a major procurement agreement to supply BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles and air-to-air missiles. This deal represents one of India's significant defense export milestones in its "Make-in India" vision.

In Australia, Prime Minister Albanese and Prime Minister Modi held the [third Australia–India Annual Summit](#) in Melbourne and released a joint statement. Both leaders reaffirmed their continued cooperation in defense, maritime security, energy, supply chain, technology, space, AI, and people-to-people exchange. Both leaders unveiled the landmark "Joint Declaration on Defense and Security Cooperation" — an ambitious framework that will institutionally deepen bilateral defense ties through structured defense dialogue, joint maritime patrol operations, intelligence and information sharing, capability development, capacity building, and operational coordination.

Both leaders reaffirmed their shared commitment to a rules-based, free, and open Indo-Pacific. They also emphasized freedom of navigation in

accordance with the sanctity of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). India and Australia are both prominent and indispensable members of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) alongside Japan and the United States. However, given US President Trump's preference for bilateral engagements over multilateral cooperation frameworks, the question of the Quad's strategic future has been raised with mounting urgency — amid uncertainty about the timing and substantive details of the next Quad Leaders' Summit, which has been overdue since 2025.

Modi was received with a ceremonial welcome by New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon. The two leaders formally endorsed the "India–New Zealand Strategic Partnership: Roadmap to 2030" — a comprehensive blueprint for structured long-term bilateral engagement. Both leaders also [signed a Defense Cooperation Agreement alongside a Maritime Cooperation Agreement](#) (MCA) and pledged to substantially expand their partnership in education, research, science and technology, and disaster management. This visit built upon Luxon's earlier landmark state visit to India, during which both sides concluded a pathbreaking Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between New Zealand and India. Both Prime Ministers emphatically underscored the indispensable importance of multilateral cooperation in sustaining a free and open Indo-Pacific. Modi's visit to New Zealand is the first by an Indian Prime Minister in 40 years — a symbolic and substantive milestone in bilateral relations.

Modi's sweeping regional visits carry profound implications for the Indo-Pacific strategic order as he systematically seeks to consolidate trade linkages, energy partnerships, and defense architecture for a free and open Indo-Pacific — at a moment when China has been aggressively accelerating its missile production capacity. Also, the US-Iran peace process has collapsed, with tensions in the Middle East once again escalating toward a prolonged conflict.

NATO, Indo-Pacific Partners agree to Enhance Cooperation

NATO's Secretary General Mark Rutte met with its Indo-Pacific partners (IP4)- Australia, Japan, South Korea, and New Zealand on the sidelines of the NATO summit in Türkiye. NATO and IP4 agree to deepen cooperation in defense, technology, and supply chains. The leaders discussed the interconnected security issues: the Russia-Ukraine War, military cooperation between Russia and North Korea, China's missile test, and the Strait of Hormuz. Rutte warns "Europe and the Indo-Pacific can no longer be separated as NATO deepens ties with Asia!" Furthermore, US [Sec. Marco Rubio](#) also met with IP4 in Ankara. He stated, "NATO's vital cooperation with Indo-Pacific partners strengthens global security, and the cooperation between our three nations advances the safety, security, and prosperity of all of our nations." [Read More](#)

Tenth Anniversary of South China Tribunal Award

The [international community](#) marks the 10th anniversary of the landmark ruling of the arbitral award in the South China Sea maritime dispute between China and Philippines. In 2016, an arbitral tribunal constituted under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) rejected Beijing's expansive maritime claim on Scarborough Reef in the South China Sea. However, Beijing neither recognizes nor accepts the ruling; China officially labels the legal ruling as "null and void" with no binding power.

The tension surrounding the "nine-dash line" has escalated in recent years as Chinese coast guard ships have repeatedly been accused of dangerous maneuvers against Philippine fishing vessels in the region. On the occasion, Philippine President Marcos Jr. stated, "When we defend the rule of law, we are not merely defending the lines on a map. We are defending the lives, the livelihoods, and the future of our people". [Read More](#)

China-North Korea Commemorates Friendship Treaty

North Korea's Premier Pak Thae Song met with Chinese President Xi Jinping and other senior officials in Beijing on the occasion of the friendship treaty between the two countries. The leaders of the two countries signed the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance on July 11, 1961. The two

countries have deepened their bilateral relations in recent years and seek to expand the “strongest and the most strategic socialist ties.” Xi traveled to Pyongyang on a rare visit last month, after seven years, given North Korea's alignment with Russia, Beijing keeps North Korea within its orbit of influence.

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Indo-Pacific Quiz

In which Ocean China tested long-range ballistic missile on July 6, 2026?

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| a. North Pacific | c. South Pacific |
| b. Indian Ocean | d. Sea of Japan |

In which year the treaty of friendship was signed between China and North Korea?

- | | |
|---------|---------|
| a. 1961 | c. 1962 |
| b. 1965 | d. 1966 |

Consortium Highlights

- ❖ [Webinar Recording](#): Deterrence to Dealmaking: Assessing America's China Strategy, July 6, 9:00 AM EST / 10:00 PM Tokyo Time
 - ❖ [New Read](#): Operation Desert Fox 1998 & The Age of American Air Power Diplomacy
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Indo-Pacific Quiz Key

Here are the **Answers** for July 5, 2026, Newsletter Quiz

Q. Which country was Guam a territory of before becoming part of the United States?

b. Spain

Q. What country was the first to sign a bilateral treaty with the United States?

a. France

Contributions: Indu Saxena