



Consortium of Indo-Pacific  
Researchers

## **Indo-Pacific Weekly Mail April 29 - May 5, 2024**

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Greetings Colleagues,

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

### **Trilateral Defense Ministers' Meeting Held in Hawaii**



*Figure 1: U.S. Defense Secretary Austin, Australian Defense Minister Richard Marles, and Japanese Minister of Defense Kihara Minoru in Hawaii*

U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin III [convened](#) a Trilateral Defense Ministerial Meeting (TDMM) with his Australian and Japanese counterparts. In the joint statement, the Ministers expressed their commitments for the shared values and determination to deepen cooperation to promote the security, stability, and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific and beyond. The Ministers acknowledged the significant progress on trilateral partnership to contribute free and open Indo-Pacific. They reiterated their unwavering and resolute opposition to any attempt by China to unilaterally alter the status quo in the South and East China Seas. They voiced deep-seated concern over the perilous and illicit disruptions through the coast guard vessels and maritime militia in the maritime order, in accordance with international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

It is worth noting that the Philippines coast guard has been [reporting](#) instances of China's alleged harassment and interference with their operations in the disputed waters of the South China Sea. Specifically, both countries claim sovereignty over Scarborough Shoal, a disputed landmass located within the area. The Philippine Navy's allegations of Chinese aggression in the region have been a major point of tension between the two countries. In a recent development Manila summoned Chinese Envoy regarding the aggressive actions.

Furthermore, they reaffirm their strong commitment to the ASEAN centrality and unity principle, recognizing it as a fundamental pillar of regional stability. They also underscored the vital role of enhancing

cooperation with Southeast Asian partners, including the Philippines, and welcomed the [second meeting](#) of Australia, Japan, Philippines, and United States Defense Ministers and Secretary, which is also taking place in Hawaii. They have also shown strong support for their Pacific partners in the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific and the deepening of AUKUS cooperation. This support is demonstrated through various trilateral exercises and expanded partnerships, reflecting their determination to keep the Indo-Pacific free, open, secure, and prosperous. [Read More](#)

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## **Solomon Islands Elects its New Prime Minister**

The Solomon Islands, a sovereign state with nine provinces, has [recently elected](#) its new Prime Minister, Jeremiah Manele. This island nation is located in the southwestern Pacific Ocean and is an important player in the Indo-Pacific region. The United States and China have been competing for influence in this region, which is considered a crucial strategic location for both countries.

China has been increasing its presence in the Pacific Islands, including the Solomon Islands, through a security agreement. It has enhanced the agreement to a "[comprehensive strategic partnership](#)." This agreement has given China greater access to the region, which has raised concerns among other countries, including the United States.

The election of Jeremiah Manele as the new Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands could have significant implications for the country's relationship with China and the United States. It remains to be seen how Manele's leadership will impact the delicate balance of power between the United States and China in this important region. [Read More](#)

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### **Taiwan's Re-Entry in World Health Assembly (WHA)**

The World Health Organization (WHO) will hold its here Member State delegates and health experts from around the world will discuss priorities for advancing global health and global health security. As per reports, the United States has unequivocally expressed its strong support and encouragement for Taiwan's participation as an observer, underlining its commitment to enhancing global cooperation in global health security. [Read More](#)

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### **Chinese President Enroute to Europe**

President Xi [travels to France, Hungary, and Serbia](#). In this visit he will meet to France President Macron and European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen on Monday. It is assumed that Xi's visit aims to

ease trade tensions with the European Union and leverage China's influence in the Ukraine conflict with Russia. [Read More](#)

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## **Indo-Pacific Quiz**

How many provinces are there in the Solomon Islands?

- a. Six
- b. Eight
- c. Seven
- d. Nine

Which country has launched its first Lunar Mission recently?

- a. Pakistan
  - b. Singapore
  - c. Sri Lanka
  - d. Vietnam
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## **Consortium Highlights**

### ❖ Upcoming Events

- Webinar: Environmental Security in the Indo-Pacific
  - Roundtable Discussion: India Elections 2024: Analyzing the Geopolitical Dynamics in South Asia
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Contributions: Indu Saxena