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Indo-Pacific Weekly Mail Feb. 23 – March 2, 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.

U.S.- China Relations Set to Deteriorate, as Tariffs Announced



Figure 1: The U.S. President Donald J. Trump & China's President Xi Jinping in 2017. IMAGE/ The Guardian

U.S. President Donald Trump's announcement last week that tariffs on China will ramp up 10 % more from March 4 will potentially worsen U.S.-China relations. Earlier, on February 1, [Trump announced](#) a 25% additional tariff on imports from Canada and Mexico and a 10% additional tariff on imports from China. However, the Trump administration paused the tariffs on Canada and Mexico for 30 days as both countries agreed to work on controlling illegal immigration and fentanyl from their borders.

It is worth mentioning that the subsequent U.S. administration has warned China to stop flooding fentanyl in the United States. Since the first Trump administration, there has been stiff talk on China's role in fueling the U.S. fentanyl and opioid crisis. As per the [House of Representative Committee report](#), "the fentanyl crisis is one of the most horrific disasters that America has ever faced. On average, fentanyl kills over 200 Americans daily and is the leading cause of death for Americans aged 18-45." U.S. efforts to hold China accountable for the free flow of fentanyl to U.S. borders through Mexico and Canada and put more tariffs on China.

In response to newly announced tariffs, China is preparing to implement retaliatory tariffs on U.S. goods exported to China. Earlier, China [counter-tariffs](#) 10% to 15% on U.S. crude oil, liquefied natural gas, farm machinery, and other products exported to China. Additionally, China announced an antitrust investigation of some U.S. companies, including Google.

U.S. has intensified countering China's influence after China launched its DeepSeek AI (Artificial Intelligence) model R1 that turned down U.S. stock markets. It is evident that the trade war between the U.S. and China may lead to a deterioration of relations between the two superpowers, and the competition may escalate into confrontation.

Thailand Deports Uyghurs to China amid Concerns of Human Rights Violation

Thailand sends 40 Uyghurs back to China who were detained for more than a decade in Thailand. However, the international officials urged the Thai government not to deport them to China. The deportation was “a clear violation of international human rights laws and standards,” according to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk. Uyghurs, a Muslim ethnic minority in China’s western province of Xinjiang, reported oppressed and abused by China.

Also, the U.S. State Department, in a statement, condemned Thailand’s forced return of Uyghurs and termed it a violation of international obligations under the UN Convention Against Torture and the International Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. It further states that Chinese Communist Party, has committed genocide and crimes against humanity targeting predominantly Muslim Uyghurs and other members of

ethnic and religious minority groups in Xinjiang and called on Chinese authorities to verify the well-being of returned ethnic group members. [Read More](#)

U.S. and Allies Kick Off Cobra Gold (CG25) Exercise

U.S. with Thailand, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Indonesia, and Malaysia Kicked off the 44th Iteration of multinational exercise in Thailand, Feb. 25, 2025. It started in 1982 and is the largest exercise in mainland Asia. More than 3,200 U.S. service members are participating in the exercise, where they will be working side by side with allies and partners to participate in joint training, multinational engagements and humanitarian projects.

As per the reports, CG25 will focus on three primary events: command-and-control exercise, humanitarian civic assistance projects and a field training exercise. Approximately 30 nations will participate either directly or as observers throughout the duration of CG25. The U.S. Ambassador to Thailand Robert F. Godec said, “This exercise affirms the enduring Thai and U.S. security partnership and is a pillar of our commitment to the region. Cobra Gold helps build interoperability, advances our common interests and is a concrete demonstration of our ongoing promise to our allies and partners to work together to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific region.” [Read More](#)

India Hosts European Leaders, Set to Finalize Trade Deal

European Union chief Ursula von der Leyen led the European delegates to India this week. India and the EU agreed to finalize a historic trade deal by the end of this year. In a [joint statement](#), both leaders emphasized their dedication to fostering cooperation in key areas such as trade, investment, technology, green growth, and space exploration. They expressed optimism about the potential benefits of working together to achieve shared goals. Indian Prime Minister shared the India-EU vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific region and emphasize to work together on development projects in Africa and the Indo-Pacific. [Read More](#)

Indo-Pacific Quiz

In which country Chao Phraya River flows

- a. South Korea
- b. Thailand
- c. Malaysia
- d. Japan

Which of the following country does not share a border with India?

- a. China
 - b. Nepal
 - c. Bangladesh
 - d. Thailand
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Consortium Highlights

- ❖ Online Webinar, Rebuilding Gaza: A Path to Lasting Peace? March 3, 2025, at 9:00 AM EST. Join with [Zoom Link](#)

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