



Consortium of Indo-Pacific
Researchers

Indo-Pacific Weekly Mail April 21-27, 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.

Balikatan Military Exercise 2025 Kicks Off



Figure 1: New deployment of Navy-Marine Expeditionary Ship Interdiction System (NMESIS) onto a U.S. Air Force C-130J Super Hercules assigned to 39th Airlift Squadron during Exercise Balikatan 25 at Basco, Philippines, April 26, 2025. Image/ dvidshub.net

The largest military drill between the United States and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) begins in the Basco, Batanes province, Philippines. This is the 40th iteration of the bilateral exercise, testament of ironclad alliance, which supports the U.S.-Philippine Mutual Defense Treaty by enhancing military cooperation and readiness between the two militaries. The exercise included military officials and diplomats from the Philippines, United States, Japan, Australia, and other nations observing the exercise. Balikatan's growing list of like-minded nations demonstrates a strong international commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific.

In his [opening remarks](#), U.S. Marine Corps Lt. Gen. James F. Glynn, U.S. exercise director and Commander, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Pacific, said, "We have more than 14,000 participants and over 20 nations invested in what is now a signature exercise." He stated that the exercise will continue for several weeks to show our ability to maintain peace in the region. This year's exercise will have a new missile deployment

The Chief of Philippine's Army Staff stated that they will evaluate their preparedness in air, land, sea, cyber, information, and space domains through extensive exercises that combine tactical accuracy with strategic planning.

It is important to mention that this year's exercise U.S. has provided a new missile system to Philippines. On his first trip to the Indo-Pacific in March 2025, U.S. Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth announced the deployment of NMESIS. The Typhoon missile system has already been in use since Balikatan

2024. The increasing geopolitical tensions in the South China Sea, coupled with China's assertive actions towards Philippine vessels, raise concerns about regional peace and stability. The U.S. seeks to re-establish deterrence in the Indo-Pacific and advocates 'peace through strength.'

“Balikatan” is a Tagalog phrase that means “shoulder-to shoulder,” describing the spirit of the annual exercise and the close friendship between the Philippines and the United States.

India and Pakistan are on the Brink of War

[Pahalgam terror attack on Tuesday, April 22, 2025](#), that killed 26 tourists in Indian Kashmir heightened the tensions between India and Pakistan. The Indian government and all opposition parties are united to retaliate against terror attacks. The people's sentiments are high, demanding the government take harsh action against the heinous attack. The international community condemned the attack on civilians. The United States, Japan, Russia, the U.K., France, and Israel showed their solidarity with India. As per [media reports](#), The Resistance Force (TRF) claimed responsibility for terror attacks. TRF is a subsidiary of Lashkar-e-Taiba (Le-T), a terrorist group based in Pakistan.

A Pre-war Scenario-The Pahalgam terror attack in Kashmir, India, sparked the India-Pakistan crisis. The attack marks the worst assault on civilians since the Mumbai terror attack in 2008, and in the aftermath of the

attack, both countries have engaged in increasingly tense retaliatory measures. The current situation resembles a pre-war scenario, with forces from both sides mobilizing. Both countries have recalled diplomats and reduced staff to 30 at their respective high commissions. The main land border crossing- [Wagah Boder](#) in India's Punjab has been closed. The nationals from both sides are asked to return to their respective countries within 48 hours. India has canceled the Indus Water Treaty of 1960, which provides water to India and Pakistan. Pakistan has suspended all trade with India, closed its airspace for Indian airlines, and suspended the Shimla Accord 1972. The Shimla Accord defines the Line of Control (LOC) and commits both nations to negotiate bilaterally. Both country's military are on high alert, and the Indian Navy test-fires anti-ship missiles in the Arabian Sea. There have also been reports of exchanges of gunfire along the Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir for consecutive days. Furthermore, India and Pakistan possess nuclear weapons and ballistic missile capabilities, raising the specter of a catastrophic conflict.

The domestic pressure on Prime Minister Modi and his cabinet to respond stringently to the terror attack and escalatory statements from Pakistan brought two nuclear-powered states to the brink of war. The two countries have fought four wars since 1947.

U.S. and ASEAN Holds Annual Dialogue

The United States and ASEAN leaders met in Siem Reap, Cambodia for the 37th annual U.S.-ASEAN Dialogue this week. Both sides discussed ongoing cooperation under our Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. The leaders highlighted the strong partnership between the U.S. and the ASEAN countries. Senior Bureau Official for the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs Sean O'Neill emphasized greater fairness and reciprocity in trade relations and assured participants of President Trump's commitment to prioritize the safety, security, and prosperity.

Furthermore, Senior Bureau highlighted the U.S. cooperation in several key sectors -cybersecurity, developing emerging technologies, upholding freedom of navigation, and combating transnational crime, including online scam centers and synthetic drugs. He also discussed geopolitical issues and mentioned the importance of opposing any potential aggression in the region.

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JD Vance Calls for Stronger U.S. Ties on his Visit to India

U.S. Vice-President JD Vance concluded his four-day trip to India from April 21-25. Though the visit was unofficial, and he was accompanied by his Indian-origin wife, Usha Chilikuri Vance, and three children, he held meetings with Indian Prime Minister Mr. Modi, India's External Affairs Minister, and the defense minister. He had senior officials from the State Department and the

Pentagon. It has been assumed that his focus was on the U.S.-India trade and defense deals and negotiations.

He appreciated India's uniqueness and efforts not to bend with the flow of external influence. In his speech, he emphasized the collaboration between President Trump and Prime Minister Modi, highlighting their commitment to advancing shared interests in various sectors such as economy, science, technology, and space. Furthermore, he emphasized the shared goal to maintain peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region and looks forward to India's leadership at this year's Quad Summit in Delhi. [Read More](#)

Indo-Pacific Quiz

In which year did India and Pakistan sign the Indus Waters Treaty?

- | | |
|---------|---------|
| a. 1947 | c. 1960 |
| b. 1965 | d. 1971 |

Which country will hold its federal election on May 3, 2025?

- | | |
|--------------|----------------|
| a. Australia | c. Canada |
| b. Japan | d. South Korea |
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Consortium Highlights

- ❖ Upcoming Webinar: The Possibility of War Between India and Pakistan and Its Regional Implications
- ❖ Upcoming Podcast: Podcast: **North Korea's Missile Program and Security in the Korean Peninsula**
- ❖ Webinar: U.S.-Japan Alliance: Strengthening Defense and Security in the Indo-Pacific, April 30th. 9:00 AM EST

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Indo-Pacific Quiz Key

Here are the **Answers** for April 20 Newsletter Quiz

Q. In which country is Bien Hoa Air Base located?

a. Vietnam

Q. What year did the battle of Biak take place?

b. 1944

Contributions: Indu Saxena

