



Consortium of Indo-Pacific

Researchers

Indo-Pacific Weekly Mail April 14-20, 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.

XI Jinping Musters Southeast Asian Countries against U.S. Tariffs

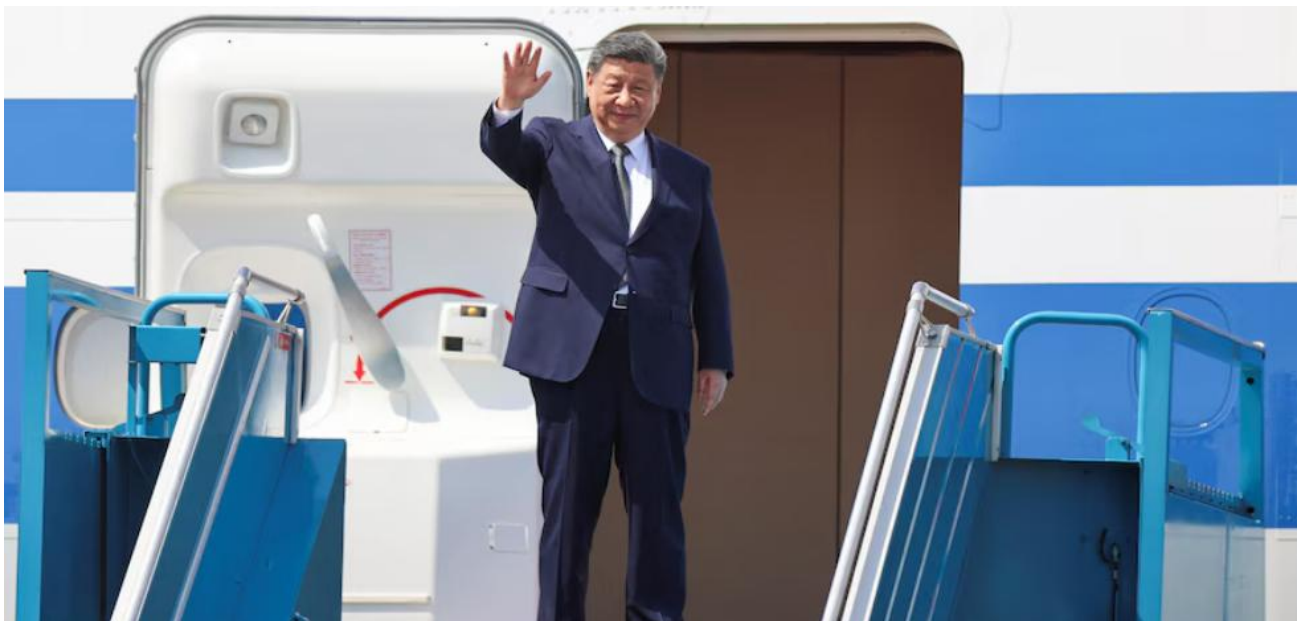


Figure 1: Chinese President Xi Jinping on his 3- nations tour of Southeast Asia, April 14, 2025. Image /abc.net.au/

Chinese President Xi Jinping was on his 3-nation tour to Vietnam, Malaysia, and Cambodia, aiming to gather support against U.S. tariffs from the Southeast Asian countries. As the U.S.-China trade war escalated, with U.S. tariffs on China at 145 percent, and in retaliation, China levied 125 percent on U.S. goods and restricted the export of rare material to the U.S. Furthermore, China suspended Boeing and suspended the Boeing jet delivery.

On his first stop in Vietnam, Xi met with Vietnamese top leader To Lam and [signed an agreement](#) to enhance supply chain cooperation and develop railway infrastructure. As per the media report, both countries signed 45 agreements of cooperation in trade, investment, energy, and artificial intelligence. Later, during his meeting with Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh, Xi said the two countries should oppose "unilateral bullying." It is important to note that the U.S. has imposed tariffs of 145 percent on China and 46 percent on Vietnam. Vietnam is currently negotiating with the U.S. to reduce it. China and Vietnam are both governed by communist parties.

In Malaysia, Xi and his Malaysian counterpart Anwar Ibrahim agreed to build a "Malaysia-China community with a shared future," advance modernization, and promote regional and global stability. Since establishing diplomatic relations in 1974, China and Malaysia have enhanced cooperation in trade, investment, technology, and infrastructure. In a [joint statement](#), they have also agreed to implement the "Five-Year Programme for Economic and Trade Cooperation (2024-2028). On the strategic front, Malaysia maintains a

consistent stance with its adherence to the 'One China Policy' and recognizes Taiwan as part of the People's Republic of China, aligning its stance for China's national reunification.

In Phnom Penh, Xi and Cambodian Prime Minister Hu Manet signed dozens of documents of cooperation. Cambodia and China have signed a \$1.2 billion financing deal for a 150-kilometre canal connecting a part of the Mekong River near Phnom Penh to a port on the Gulf of Thailand. Xi also urged Cambodian leaders to "resist protectionism" and support multilateral global trade, given the 49 percent tariff on Cambodia.

China is uniting countries with heavy tariffs from the U.S. to protect the Chinese market in the escalating trade war. However, strategically, Southeast Asian countries are adopting a cautious approach as they have disputed territorial issues with China. Further, China warns the countries not to align with the United States in this trade war at the expense of China.

U.S. Deploys Anti-Ship Missiles in the Luzon Strait

U.S. will deploy Naval Strike Missile-equipped Navy-Marine Expeditionary Ship Interdiction Systems (NMESIS) to the Luzon Strait near Taiwan during Balikatan 2025 starting this week. This will be the first-ever American anti-ship missile deployment to the strategically located first Island Chain in the South China Sea.

It is important to note that U.S. Secretary of Defense Hegseth announced that the United States would provide the NMESIS system to the Philippines during his visit to Manila last month. He also discussed ways to accelerate the U.S.-Philippines alliance, including the provision of highly capable unmanned surface vehicles for Balikatan exercise. Luzon Strait connects Philippines and Taiwan, and it is a strategically choke point of China in the Western Pacific Ocean. China criticizes the deployment of anti-ship missile in the territorial water. [Read More](#)

U.S. SEC Rubio Meets with Indonesian Foreign Minister

U.S. Secretary of State Marco A. Rubio hosts Indonesian Foreign Minister Foreign Minister Sugiono at the State Department this week. Both leaders recognized the importance of the U.S.-Indonesia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and the shared interest in maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific. Both sides discussed to enhance defense cooperation and the ways to maintain freedom of navigation in the South China Sea.

Sugiono importantly highlights Indonesia's effort to introduce economic reforms aimed at balancing its trade relationship with the United States. It is noteworthy that on April 2, President Trump announced the reciprocal tariffs and imposed a 32 percent tariff on Indonesia. For the moment, the tariffs have been paused for 90 days.

Indonesia has been working closely with U.S. officials on trade negotiations, and it is reported that the Indonesian government will increase U.S. food products and arms purchases to reduce trade imbalances with the United States. [Read More](#)

Indo-Pacific Quiz

In which country is Bien Hoa Air Base located?

- a. Vietnam
- b. Singapore
- c. Indonesia
- d. Malaysia

When was the battle of Biak fought?

- a. 1942
 - b. 1944
 - c. 1943
 - d. 1945
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Consortium Highlights

- ❖ Blogpost: **Why Americans should Discuss the Privacy v. Security Dilemma regarding social media.** [Read Here](#)
- ❖ 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 6 Newsletter Quiz

Q. Which two Southeast Asian countries worst hit by U.S. Tariffs?

b. Vietnam & Cambodia

Q. In which year did Vietnam achieve reunification?

c. 1976

Contributions: Indu Saxena