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## **Indo-Pacific Weekly Mail May 19-25, 2025**

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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.

### **ASEAN Summit Kicks off in Malaysia**



Figure 1: ASEAN Leaders meet in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia / Image / ASEAN.org

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) leaders meet at the [46th summit](#) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The member states aim to find out the way to tackle U.S. tariffs and address the regional issues, including Myanmar, to remain united during this critical period of instability.

ASEAN Secretary-General Dr. Kao Kim Hourn participated in the Signing Ceremony of the “Kuala Lumpur Declaration on ASEAN 2045: Our Shared Future.” This event marks a significant step for ASEAN in its community-building efforts over the next 20 years, aiming for a resilient, innovative, dynamic, and people-centered region.

The Kuala Lumpur Declaration on ASEAN 2045: Our Shared Future is compendium of six documents namely: The Kuala Lumpur Declaration on ASEAN 2045: Our Shared Future; “Resilient, Innovative, Dynamic, and People-Centered ASEAN”; ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) Strategic Plan; ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Strategic Plan 2026-2030; ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Strategic Plan; and ASEAN Connectivity Strategic Plan.

The text outlines a strategic vision that will help ASEAN tackle the effects of current and future megatrends and the opportunities they present while ensuring ASEAN's central role in the region. This vision aims to enhance ASEAN's standing as an influential global player capable of contributing positively and significantly to global development.

It is important to note that Southeast Asian leaders are engaged in crucial discussions regarding trade, tariffs, and defense. Simultaneously, the geopolitical environment in the Indo-Pacific is becoming tense due to the escalating trade war between the U.S. and China. Meanwhile, ASEAN leaders seek to alleviate U.S. tariffs and look forward to the upcoming U.S.-ASEAN summit. The U.S. tariffs have most severely affected some ASEAN member states: Cambodia (49%), Vietnam (46%), Laos (48%), Thailand (36%), and Malaysia (24%). The ASEAN leaders aim to diversify their supply chain and engage with other regional partner countries, such as China and the Gulf.

The Further, ASEAN countries, particularly the Philippines, are concerned about China's assertive actions in the South China Sea and view it as a threat to regional stability. However, ASEAN countries avoid picking sides in the U.S.-China confrontation in the region and seek engagement with both superpowers.

Amid trade, disruptive technology, and environmental challenges, the ASEAN member states emphasized the importance of maintaining unity during these uncertain times. Malaysian Foreign Minister Mohamad Hasan called upon the ASEAN unity and said, "External pressures are rising, and the scope of challenges has never had higher stakes; it is, therefore, crucial that we reinforce the ties that bind us so as to not unravel under external pressures."

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## **U.S. and Malaysia Participate in LIMA 25**

U.S. military units and personnel participate in the Malaysian island of Langkawi to participate in the biennial [Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition 2025](#) (LIMA 25). The event includes government, military, and industry leaders from across the region and beyond to showcase advancements in maritime and aerospace defense, civil, and commercial applications. On the occasion, the U.S. Ambassador to Malaysia Edgard D. Kagan said, “From our aircraft and warships to our companies and innovators, the American presence at LIMA 25 demonstrates our robust military and commercial engagement across the region. We are proud to stand with Malaysia as partners, friends, and defenders of a free and open Indo-Pacific – working to build a region that is safer, stronger, and more prosperous.”

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## **Indonesia and China Strengthen Ties amid Global Trade War**

Chinese Premier Li Qiang is on a three-day visit to Jakarta, where he met with Indonesia's President Prabowo Subianto. Both leaders discussed expanding trade and investment amid the U.S. global trade war and the challenges facing economic globalization. Both leaders addressed Indonesia-China business groups and stressed on mutual progress on growth and investment. Indonesian President invited Chinese businesspeople to invest more in Indonesia as the two-way trade exceeded \$147.8 billion last year. Both countries signed twelve agreements including a deal to use local currency in bi-lateral trade that could be a significant step to reduce the dependency of U.S. dollar. [Read More](#)

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## **French President is on a Tour of Southeast Asia, Aim to Deepen Ties**

French President Emmanuel Macron is on a [trip to three Southeast Asian countries](#): Vietnam, Singapore, and Indonesia. Macron's visit aims at strengthening ties with the Southeast Asian countries. and to show a reliable partner in the Indo-Pacific. The visit happens at a time when the region has been facing a challenge from the U.S. tariffs and has been caught between the U.S. and China's power play in the Indo-Pacific. Further, U.S. President Trump's announcement of 50 percent tariffs on goods coming to the U.S. from the European Union (E.U.) countries caused concerns about disrupting the supply chain in Europe. French President seeks to enhance trade, defense, and energy relations with Vietnam, Singapore, and Indonesia. Furthermore, Macron Pitches France as a reliable partner in the Indo-Pacific and emphasizes establishing a free and open Indo-Pacific where Southeast Asian countries have disputes with China in the South China Sea. [Read More](#)

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### **Indo-Pacific Quiz**

Which country overtake Japan to become the 4<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world?

- |                   |           |
|-------------------|-----------|
| a. South Korea    | c. India  |
| b. United Kingdom | d. France |

Lee Kuan Yew was the Prime Minister of which country?

- a. Singapore
  - b. Japan
  - c. China
  - d. Taiwan
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## Consortium Highlights

- ❖ Podcast: **North Korea's Missile Program and Security in the Korean Peninsula**, May 14, 6:30 PM EDT. [Listen Here](#)
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## Indo-Pacific Quiz Key

Here are the **Answers** for May 18 Newsletter Quiz

Q. Who was the leader of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1956

- d. Mao Zedong

Q. In which country are the Ryūkyū Islands located?

- b. Japan
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Contributions: Indu Saxena

