



Consortium of Indo-Pacific  
Researchers

## **Indo-Pacific Weekly Mail July 21-27, 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.

### **Philippines President Visits Washington**



Figure 1: President Trump Greets the President of the Philippines Marcos Jr. at White House, July 22, 2025  
/IMAGE/WH. Gov

The Philippines' President Marcos Jr. arrived in Washington and met President Trump. Both leaders participated in bilateral meetings at the White House, seeking to enhance bilateral relations, particularly in trade, defense, and energy. The US and the Philippines agreed to a trade deal with open access to US goods in the Philippines' markets. Marcos is the first leader from the ASEAN countries to visit the US, and the Philippines is the second country to make a trade deal with the US after Indonesia. During his meeting with Trump, Marcos expressed concern about the geopolitical issues with China in the South China Sea. He asserted that the Philippines would protect its sovereign rights and territorial integrity with the US alliance.

DEFSEC [Pete Hegseth also hosted Marcos](#) at the Pentagon. Hegseth reiterated the US commitment to achieving peace through strength and enhance deterrence in the region. He said, "Our storied alliance has never been stronger or more essential than it is today, and together we remain committed to the Mutual Defense Treaty. And this pact extends to armed attacks on our armed forces, aircraft or public vessels, including our Coast Guard anywhere in the Pacific, including the South China Sea."

It is worth mentioning that the Philippines has a long-standing territorial dispute with China in the South China Sea. China asserts its claim through a nine-dash line that encloses a vast area of the Sea, and the Chinese coast guard has frequently used water cannon to push back Filipino vessels in the South China Sea, accusing them of being illegal and without China's

permission. The judgment of the International Arbitration Tribunal 2016 ruled in favor of the Philippines' sovereignty and territorial claim, but China refused to abide by it. Furthermore, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, and Taiwan also face the same issue with China in the region.

Additionally, in his meeting with President Marcos, Secretary of State Marco Rubio discussed the significance of the ironclad US-Philippines Alliance to maintaining peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. [Read More](#)

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## **US and Japan sign Trade deal**

US President Donald Trump announces a landmark deal with Japan that will create \$550 billion in new Japanese investment in the United States, with 90 percent of the profits to be used for rebuilding and expanding American industries. The US-Japan trade agreement framework will open the Japanese market to US products and goods, while the US will impose 15 percent tariffs on Japanese goods entering the US. According to the framework, Japan will purchase USD 8 billion in US goods, including corn, soybeans, fertilizer, bioethanol, and sustainable aviation fuel. Furthermore, Japan will increase its imports of American rice. The Japan /US investment will focus on revitalizing the crucial industry and research in America. Both countries will work together in energy production, semiconductors, research, critical minerals, defense, and shipbuilding.

Mentioning the factsheet, “It delivers a powerful signal that the U.S.–Japan alliance is not only a cornerstone of peace in the Indo-Pacific, but also a driver of global growth and innovation.” [Read More](#)

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## **India and Maldives Reset Ties**

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the Maldives on a State Visit. He was invited by the President of the Maldives, Dr. Muizzu, to be the Chief Guest at the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Maldives' Independence Day. Modi and Muizzu signed the agreement on trade, agriculture, health, fisheries, aquaculture, and providing digital solutions. Both leaders also reviewed the progress of the India-Maldives Comprehensive Economic and Maritime Security Partnership, a joint vision adopted in October 2024 during Muizzu's visit to Delhi.

India will also provide a credit line of USD 565 million to the Maldives. India boost its ties to the Maldives underscoring the importance of its "Neighborhood First" policy and the Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) vision.

It is worth to note that this marks a reset in India-Maldives relations, following Muizzu's election campaign last year, which was centered on the “India Out” platform. He is known as a ‘Pro-China’ leader by some observers, as after winning the 2023 election, he visited China and signed a defense pact with his counterpart, Xi Jinping. Furthermore, the derogatory remarks by two

Maldivian ministers about Mr. Modi caused an uproar in relations between the two countries. [Read More](#)

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## **US Initiates Peace amid Escalating Tension between Thailand and Cambodia**

Thailand and Cambodia have been [involved in a violent clash over a long-standing border dispute](#), while President Trump has initiated a peace deal. The border clash between Cambodia and Thailand has emerged in a violent conflict and has taken the lives of at least 34 people. The tension started after the confrontation between the two countries over an ancient temple.

President Trump wants to make peace and Sec. Rubio spoke with Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Prak Sokhonn and Thai Foreign Minister Maris Sangiampongsa to urge them to de-escalate the situation and offered the opportunity to facilitate dialogue between the two hostile neighbors. [Read More](#)

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## **Indo-Pacific Quiz**

Which country has withdrawn from UNESCO?

a. Taiwan

c. Japan

b. USA

d. Israel

Which country doesn't border Thailand?

a. Laos

c. Cambodia

b. Malaysia

d. Singapore

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## Consortium Highlights

- ❖ Upcoming Event: US-Japan Alliance, August 22, 9:30 A.M. EST
- ❖ View: **Battleship Drones: Desert Storm, Remotely Piloted Vehicles, and Joint Lessons for the 21st Century Warfighters.** [Read Here.](#)

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## Indo-Pacific Quiz Key

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

Q. Which country has held the Upper House Election on July 20,2025?

c. Japan

Q. Which is the first country to recognize the Taliban?

d. Russia

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Contributions: Indu Saxena

