







Trump’s Election Victory: The View from the Region

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In response to the U.S. election outcome, TAG sampled media commentaries and official statements from across the Indo-Pacific region, leveraged our in-house AI engine’s capabilities to process those findings, then peppered our results with insights from the region. Overall, we found that the major economies of the region feel challenged by the impending Trump presidency, but largely confident that they can continue to engage the United States effectively.

Key Takeaways

Country	Overall Sentiment	Recurring Themes
Australia 	Mixed, leaning negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns about high tariffs and a possible U.S.-China trade war, global financial instability, and U.S. climate skepticism Optimism based around AUKUS and the U.S. trade surplus with Australia
China 	Neutral (state media reports) Negative (commentaries)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dismay about Trump’s likely China tariffs, the high costs of a trade war, and U.S. undermining of free trade institutions Expectation that wars in Ukraine and the Middle East may exacerbate tensions in U.S.-China relations
India 	Mixed, leaning positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enthusiasm for Trump and Modi’s personal relationship and U.S.-India collaboration in critical and emerging technologies Concern that Trump’s proposed trade and immigration restrictions will hamper progress in bilateral ties
Japan 	Mixed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive perceptions of first Ishiba-Trump call and optimism stemming from Trump-related boost in stock prices Significant concerns about tariffs, export controls, Nippon Steel, and pressure on alliance burden sharing
South Korea 	Mixed, leaning negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anxiety over Trump’s tariffs and unilateral, transactional approach to negotiations with North Korea Concern that retrenchment of the CHIPS Act and IRA will harm South Korean EV and electronics exporters
Vietnam 	Neutral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reporting is largely neutral, but references opportunities for deepening engagement with U.S. in strategic sectors Hints that tariffs will harm Vietnam’s export-heavy economy, especially its green tech and electronics sectors



- **Across the Indo-Pacific, sentiment about the U.S. election outcome is mixed, albeit with a negative skew.** Many outlets from different Asian media ecosystems are expressing variations of the same argument: that Trump's combative approach to U.S.-China strategic competition could create some windfall gains, but his protectionist trade agenda and transactional approach will likely cause significant friction with regional allies and partners over time.
- **Trump's proposal for universal tariffs – as well as targeted trade actions against China – were the most frequently cited source of risk.** Another widespread concern was Trump's hints about withdrawing support for regional allies and partners such as Japan and South Korea if they do not increase defense spending. Many fear potential disruptions to security cooperation could embolden adversaries such as China, Russia, and North Korea.
- **Many commentaries specifically highlighted Trump's transactional approach to international politics, with little consensus either within or between countries about whether it will help or harm bilateral relations.** Some argue that this mentality could compel new investments in the United States. Others anticipate that it will lead to unpredictable shifts in U.S. policy, especially vis-à-vis regional flashpoints such as Taiwan and North Korea.

Australia

The Australian sources in our sample largely conveyed mixed-to-negative sentiment about President-elect Trump's second term. While some commentators suggested that Trump's "pro-business" agenda could create favorable investment opportunities for Australian companies (especially in the defense and technology sectors), most expressed deep reservations about the impact of Trump's tariffs on Australian exporters and concerns about the effects of his skepticism of climate change and renewables.

Australia's post-election commentaries reflect widespread apprehension over Trump's protectionist trade agenda. A prominent point of concern is the potential for a reignited trade war between Washington and Beijing, which is expected to disrupt Australia's supply chains and increase production costs for consumer goods, electronics, and green tech. Some expressed concern toward Trump's climate skepticism and his intent to once again withdraw from the Paris agreement, which could impede global decarbonization efforts, undercut Australia's emerging renewables sector, and hamper global coordination on environmental regulation.

Despite these concerns, some Australian analysts have expressed cautious optimism about the future of U.S.-Australia relations. Many note the alliance's historical durability and the stability of AUKUS, which has strong bipartisan backing



in both the U.S. and Australia. Moreover, a few commentaries have noted that Trump's anticipated moves towards deregulation and his tax policies could benefit Australian firms and boost investor confidence, job creation, and wealth.

China

China's media ecosystem is tightly controlled and, accordingly, the Chinese sources in our sample exhibited little variation in sentiment. News coverage about the election results has been neutral and brief, with official statements emphasizing that China respects the outcome of the U.S. political process and that the United States and China have more to gain by cooperation than competition. However, commentaries from academia and government-run think tanks were more critical, condemning Trump's tariff policies and support for technological and economic decoupling. Nearly all the surveyed sources suggested that the U.S.-China relationship is likely to become more precarious, although some suggested that Trump's interest in "making a deal" could provide an off ramp.

Unsurprisingly, many Chinese commentaries have focused on how Trump's proposal for a 60 percent tariff on all Chinese exports – along with additional duties on EVs, batteries, steel products, and other goods – could destabilize the U.S.-China relationship and cause significant disruptions to global supply chains. Further underscoring concerns about economic decoupling, Chinese pundits have criticized Trump's support for export controls on advanced technologies, as well as his skepticism of the WTO and other international organizations. These critical perspectives echo official government talking points and tend to portray China as a protector of free trade in contrast to an increasingly right-leaning and protectionist United States – a framing which supports Beijing's efforts to mollify international frustrations about its dumping and overcapacity.

Several articles also expressed uncertainty about how a second Trump administration might handle regional flashpoints such as the South China Sea, East China Sea, and Taiwan – as well as the ongoing wars in Ukraine and the Middle East. Chinese post-election commentaries were especially apprehensive about the likely appointment of China hawks to Trump's cabinet, noting that Washington may choose to embrace containment policies intended to suppress Beijing. These sentiments, alongside recent official statements, are likely aimed at signaling to the incoming Trump administration that Beijing considers interference with territorial integrity, domestic politics, and economic and technological development as "red line" issues.



India

The Indian sources in our sample expressed mixed sentiment on the outlook for U.S.-India relations under President-elect Trump. Some commentators voiced enthusiasm about Modi's warm relationship with Trump and posited that shared interests in critical and emerging technologies create a strong foundation for bilateral relations. Others noted that Trump's tariff policies and tough stance on immigration are likely to dampen much of the good will fostered through the Quad, iCET, and other forms of U.S.-India collaboration – even if India expects broad continuity in these areas under the new administration.

Many Indian analysts anticipate that U.S.-India bilateral relationship will remain stable – and potentially grow – under a second Trump administration. Some commentaries noted that Trump's strong interpersonal relationship with Modi, as well as both countries' interest in innovation of critical and emerging technologies (including AI, biotechnology, and aerospace platforms), could help manage potential friction points. However, this is tempered by other concerns that Trump's prioritization of domestic industry and that his administration may not be as interested in co-development.

There is also optimism that the Trump administration's interest in bolstering economic resilience could support the global proliferation of "China Plus One" strategies, which could create opportunities for India's technology, pharmaceuticals, and manufacturing sectors.

Nevertheless, significant concerns remain about higher tariffs and trade tensions, which may adversely impact Indian exporters, especially given the large trade deficit with New Delhi. Additionally, several commentators suggested that Trump's interest in dismantling or repealing the IRA and his preference of traditional energy sources could create setbacks for the U.S.-India green energy partnership. Finally, several articles express unease over Trump's strict immigration policies (including narrowing restrictions for H-1B and student visas), which they believe could limit education and employment opportunities for the Indian diaspora in the United States.

Japan

Japanese sources in our sample conveyed a mixed outlook on U.S.-Japan relations under President-elect Trump. While there is some optimism about a potential Trump-Ishiba relationship and the effect of a more deregulated U.S. business environment on Japanese markets, many are concerned about Trump's trade agenda, export controls on advanced semiconductors and related equipment, and demands that Tokyo contribute more for its own defense.



The Japanese media has responded to Trump's re-election with a mix of pragmatic optimism and caution. On the optimistic side, some news outlets noted that Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba's first phone call to congratulate President-elect Trump was friendly and signaled potential cooperation on shared issue areas, such as China's increasingly assertive maritime behavior. A few commentators have suggested that Trump and Ishiba could develop a relationship as friendly as the one between Trump and the late former prime minister Shinzo Abe given that Ishiba, who ran for prime minister five times, has long been on the fringe of the LDP and Trump likes outsiders and "fighters." Additionally, some articles noted that Trump's re-election has led to more risk-acceptant financial markets, with investors who previously adopted a wait-and-see approach until the outcome of the election now moving to purchase large volumes of high-value stock and boosting the Japanese economy.

Nevertheless, Trump's protectionist trade policies have elicited significant concern from Japan's business sector – particularly the Japanese auto industry, which is heavily reliant on exports to the United States. Commentators are anxious about the precedent set by Trump's pledge to block the Nippon Steel-U.S. Steel merger; his transactional use of tariffs and export controls; an increase in trade disputes; and the end of the U.S.-led Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF), mirroring Trump's earlier decision to pull out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). Officials also expressed concern about the future of U.S.-Japan security cooperation given likely pressure on Japan to further increase its own defense spending and contributions to U.S. basing in Japan. They are especially worried that Japan will lack critical U.S. support amid increasingly hostile provocations from North Korea and China.

South Korea

Our sample suggests that South Korean sentiment about Donald Trump's re-election has been mixed-to-negative. Although some commentators posit that Trump's more transactional approach to diplomacy could create opportunities for South Korean firms to expand their operations in the United States, most of the coverage focused on new sources of uncertainty in the bilateral relationship – especially over trade and security policy.

South Korea's post-election commentaries repeatedly highlight Trump's "America First" trade policy as one of the most anticipated sources of tension. Several predicted that tariffs and the possible recalibration of existing trade arrangements – including the South Korea-U.S. (KORUS) FTA – would pose significant challenges for South Korean industries. Relatedly, the media emphasized that Trump's pledges to scale back the CHIPS Act – though this is less likely to materialize – and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) could delay, impose additional requirements upon, or even outright nullify outstanding disbursements, tax cuts, and other benefits enjoyed by major South Korean EV and EV battery companies that are highly dependent on exports to the United States for equipment and components.



While the U.S.-South Korea alliance and its complementary mechanisms will remain an indispensable component of U.S. foreign policy in the Indo-Pacific, some South Korean reports expressed concern that the incoming Trump administration may create friction with Seoul vis-à-vis North Korea. For example, analysts suggested that Trump could exclude Seoul from negotiations with Pyongyang in favor of a more direct and transactional relationship with Kim Jong Un, which served as a core part of his first term's diplomatic approach. Additionally, some underscored that Trump could reopen settled conversations on the cost of hosting U.S. troops on the Korean peninsula or deprioritize multilateral security efforts with Japan and other regional players, potentially emboldening North Korea to engage in further destabilizing behavior while deepening ties with Russia.

However, avenues for increased bilateral security cooperation will remain, as pointed out by several South Korean reports. For instance, sources suggested that President Yoon Suk Yeol's brief call with Trump on November 7 – which explicitly touched upon South Korea's shipbuilding capabilities – could presage closer integration of the two countries' defense industrial base to the benefit of heavy industry and the defense sector.

Vietnam

The Vietnamese sources in our sample expressed mostly neutral sentiment on U.S.-Vietnam relations following President-elect Trump's victory. Reporting on the election has briefly highlighted how Trump could strengthen U.S.-Vietnam economic and strategic ties, although several articles hint at concerns about the economic implications of Trump's protectionist policies on Vietnam's development.

Vietnamese coverage of the U.S. election and its outcome has been consistently neutral, with most reports in our sample sticking to facts rather than offering explicit commentary. Nevertheless, several articles highlighted Trump's interest in taking a tougher stance on China and his desire to boost U.S. domestic energy production, which could create opportunities for Hanoi to strengthen its position in global supply chains as U.S.-China tensions drive investment and trade diversification. Additionally, Vietnamese reporting has emphasized Trump's belief in the Republican principle of "peace through strength," which aligns with Vietnam's interest in countering Chinese assertiveness in the South China Sea and preserving regional stability.

Amid these more optimistic talking points, the Vietnamese media has also hinted (albeit subtly) that Trump's protectionist policies – particularly increased tariffs on green technology, electronics, and consumer goods – could disrupt Vietnam's export-heavy economy. As the United States is Vietnam's largest export destination, there is anxiety that the tariff and non-tariff barriers associated with



Trump's "America First" agenda will further undermine Vietnam's access to U.S. markets, including in strategic sectors such as heavy industry and semiconductors. Notably, Vietnamese reporting has not addressed Trump's foreign policy agenda. Given Hanoi's own strategy of "bamboo diplomacy" which balances engagement with the United States, Russia, and China, Vietnam is unlikely to have strong opinions on Trump's foreign relations so long as they do not disrupt its own efforts to maintain stable relations with all parties.

This report was prepared by TAG's Research Team with the assistance of Amelia, our in-house AI engine. Samples of in-country reporting and commentary were carefully curated by TAG's country teams.