

Trump makes Asian Trade Trip

By [Ashleigh Huddart](#)

Wednesday 22 November 2017



Image: The White House

President Donald Trump has returned from a gruelling 12 day trip to east Asia, during which he attended three international summits and met with more than half a dozen foreign leaders. The region is vital to the US's trade prospects, and was another crucial test for Trump's diplomacy credentials.

Beginning in Japan and running through South Korea, China, Vietnam and the Phillipines, the 12 day tour had the potential to be pivotal in foreign perceptions of Trump: a chance to prove his diplomatic prowess, address the nuclear threat from North Korea or perhaps discuss the fate of Taiwan.

Security dominated the trip from the offset, as Trump and the leaders of China, South Korea and Japan convened to discuss North Korea and the encroachingly hostile nature of Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un. Trump encouraged military hardware sales in Tokyo and Seoul, boasting that the deal would mean "a lot of jobs for us and a lot of safety for Japan" in a joint news conference with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

President Trump has since hailed the trip a success. "I think we made a lot of progress just in terms of relationship," Trump told reporters as Air Force One left Manila. "We actually sold \$300 billion worth of equipment and other things and I think that number is going to be quadrupled very quickly."

Despite this self-proclaimed success, President Trump has faced criticism at home for his silence on human rights during the trip, failing to mention the issue in China or in the Phillipines. There was no public recognition of the thousands who have died so far in Filipino President Rodrigo Duterte's "war on drugs", nor during Trump's time with Xi Jinping, who is currently leading China's most severe crackdown on

human rights in decades. Indeed his time with Xi Jinping was surprisingly cordial considering the infamous anti-China rhetoric he used during the 2016 Presidency race. During his time in Vietnam, Donald Trump made clear that during his presidency, the US would pursue one-on-one negotiations in terms of trade, rather than signing multinational trade deals such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership, or the TPP. At a regional summit in the country, Trump alluded that the reason for this is because his administration “will not tolerate” a continuation of what he sees as trade abuses, and that to do business with the US, countries must “follow the rules” of such partnerships or deals.

Despite the US having withdrawn from the 12-nation TPP, President Trump has insisted he still wants the US to be a key player in international trade, specifically Asia. “I am here to offer a renewed partnership with America,” Trump told a summit meeting in Vietnam over the weekend, “to work together to strengthen the bonds of friendship and commerce between all of the nations of the Indo-Pacific, and together, to promote our prosperity and security.”

Perhaps indicative of this desire for cooperation on trade in the Asian continent, then, is the joint signing of commercial contracts between Trump and Jinping for the sale of American exports, such as natural gas and computer chips. Notwithstanding, these contracts may be little more than symptomatic of China’s unwillingness to go near subjects they consider to be uncomfortable. Christopher Johnson, an expert on China at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said that “China is willing to sign [business] deals all day long, as long as it stays away from industrial policy and the market access issues that they’re seeking to avoid.”

President Trump evidently viewed his trip to Asia as a success. Perhaps it was this confidence that prompted him to round off the trip with a surprisingly warm attitude towards the press. He joked about the length of the trip with reporters: “We’ll give you a chance to sleep,” Trump said. “Because the press, I have to tell you, I’m very impressed. You stayed with us. You were able to hang in there. I’m very proud of you.



Most Read **Discussed**

1. [What is the difference between tax evasion and tax avoidance?](#)
2. [Review: Little Mix - LM5](#)
3. [Penalty for submitting work up to an hour late halved](#)
4. [UK government in contempt of Parliament ahead of key Brexit vote](#)
5. [How to depose a Conservative leader](#)
6. [Led Astray - The Case Against Greta Van Fleet](#)

Write for Nouse Politics

[Get in touch with the editors](#)

[Join the Facebook group](#)

More in Politics

[UK government in contempt of Parliament ahead of key Brexit vote](#)

[How to depose a Conservative leader](#)

[Aufwiedersehen: Merkel plans her departure](#)

[US turnout surges in Midterms](#)

[Trans-Atlantic spats overshadow Centenary](#)

[Up to a million Muslims imprisoned by China](#)

- [About Nouse](#)
- [Who's Nouse](#)
- [Website Credits](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Advertising](#)
- [Archives](#)
- [Student Discounts](#)
- [Print Editions](#)
- [Mini-Sites](#)
- [Nouse on Twitter](#)
- [Nouse on Facebook](#)
- [Nouse on Google+](#)

