



# USINDOPACOM Legal Vigilance Update

## Issue #55, 14 November 2025

PREVAIL

Teammates,

Below please find the 55<sup>th</sup> edition of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command's (USINDOPACOM) Legal Vigilance Update (LVU). To access previous LVUs, please visit <https://www.pacom.mil/Contact/Directory/Jo/Jo6-Staff-Judge-Advocate/>.

### Quote of the Week:

“The People’s Liberation Army’s (PLA’s) coercive military actions in and around Taiwan have been characterized by the commander of the Taiwan Navy, Adm. Tang Hua, as an ‘**anaconda strategy**,’ which is designed to ‘squeeze Taiwan, [...] exhaust its response system, force mistakes, and perhaps trigger an excuse to launch a blockade.’ These include near-daily incursions into the island nation’s air defense identification zone, maritime activities including the reported cutting of undersea cables, and more regular complex joint military exercises and operations—including those involving all branches of the PLA. The resulting trends are significant: PLA naval and air activities around Taiwan have reached all-time highs, an intensification that is evident in its scale, scope, and frequency.”

Ariane Tabatabai

*Russia and China in the Gray Zone*

The Lawfare Institute, November 14, 2025

- 11-12 November 2025: G7 Foreign Ministers meet to discuss maritime security and prosperity, critical minerals, economic resilience, and energy security.
  - **Bottom-line:** the G7 Foreign Ministers of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, and the High Representative of the European Union, **reaffirmed the importance of a free and open Indo-Pacific based on the rule of law and reiterated their strong opposition to any unilateral attempts to change the status quo in particular by force or coercion, including in the East China Sea and the South China Sea.**
    - References:
      - [Joint Statement of G7 Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in Niagara \(U.S. Department of State Office of the Spokesperson, Nov. 12, 2025\)](#)
    - Key Points:
      - The G7 Foreign Ministers “**expressed serious concern over the use of dangerous maneuvers and water cannons in the South China Sea, as well as efforts to restrict freedom of navigation and overflight through militarization and coercion in the South China Sea.**”



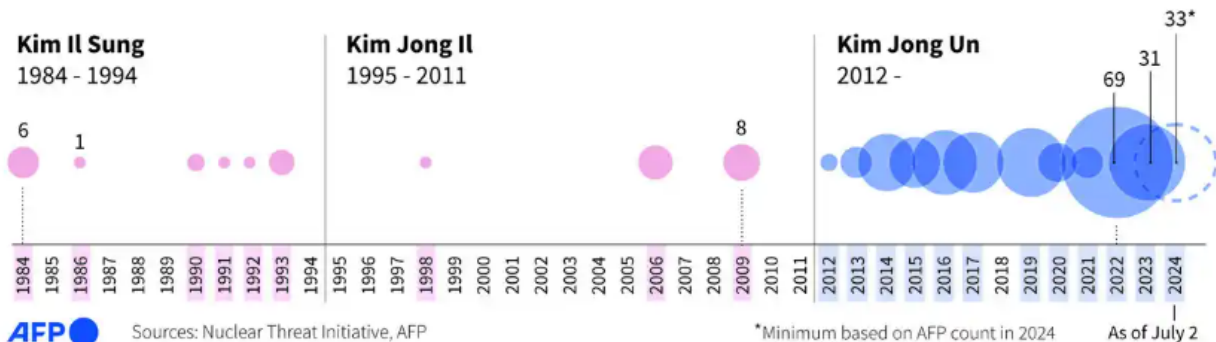
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- They “reiterated that the award rendered by the Arbitral Tribunal on 12 July 2016 is a significant milestone, binding upon the parties.”
- The Foreign Ministers “emphasized the importance of maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait, and opposed any unilateral attempts to change the status quo, particularly by force or coercion.”
  - They “**encouraged the peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues through constructive dialogue**” and “**expressed support for Taiwan’s meaningful participation in appropriate international organizations.**”
- The Foreign Ministers “strongly condemned the DPRK’s nuclear and ballistic missile programs and reaffirmed [their] commitment to the complete denuclearization of the DPRK, in accordance with relevant UN Security Council Resolutions.”
- In reaffirming their “unwavering support for Ukraine in defending its territorial integrity and right to exist, and its freedom, sovereignty, and independence,” the Foreign Ministers “**condemned the provision to Russia of military assistance by DPRK and Iran, and the provision of weapons and dual-use components by China, a decisive enabler of Russia’s war.**”
- **7 November 2025:** the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) fired a ballistic missile toward the sea off its east coast.
  - **Bottom-line: DPRK ballistic missile launches are flagrant violations of international law as stated in multiple unanimously approved UN Security Council Resolutions.**
    - References:
      - [Jack Kim & Joyce Lee, North Korea fires ballistic missile towards the sea off its east coast \(Reuters, Nov. 6, 2025\)](#)
    - Key Points:
      - In a statement, [U.S. Indo-Pacific Command](#) said: “While we have assessed that this event does not pose an immediate threat to U.S. personnel or territory, or to our allies, the missile launch highlights the destabilizing impact of the DPRK’s actions.”
      - The UN Security Council has adopted [at least nine major sanctions resolutions](#) on the DPRK in response to the country’s nuclear and missile activities since 2006.
      - The [UNSCRs prohibit the DPRK](#) from conducting further ballistic-missile (and nuclear-weapons-delivery) launches; prohibit Member States from supplying missiles, missile-technology, dual-use items or revenue-generating exports to the DPRK; mandate inspections, asset freezes, travel bans and embargoes on cargo, fuel, minerals and vessels tied to the DPRK’s missile and WMD activities; and require the DPRK to suspend and abandon its missile and WMD delivery systems in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

## A history of North Korea’s missile launches

One dynasty, three generations

Number of missile tests annually since 1984, based on the CNS North Korea missile test database



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- **13 November 2025:** in yet another effort to intimidate Taiwan, China offered cash rewards for tips on so-called Taiwan “separatists.”
  - **Bottom-line:** Beijing continues its coercive campaign against Taiwan’s democracy, with police in China now offering a cash reward for tips on two Taiwanese online influencers China claims are “publishing and spreading separatist remarks.”
    - **References:**
      - [Phoebe Zhang, Mainland Chinese police offer cash rewards for tips on Taiwan’s ‘terrible’ influencers \(South China Morning Post, Nov. 13, 2025\)](#)
    - **Key Points:**
      - China’s police reportedly issued a wanted notice and offered a US\$35,000 reward for information on two Taiwanese social media influencers that China accuses of “separatism,” in what Taipei says is an effort by China to bring fear to Taiwanese.
      - ***China’s intimidation of so-called “separatists” under its 2005 Anti-Secession Law and its 2024 legal opinion targeting “diehard Taiwan separatists” is an attempt to coercively influence and intervene in Taiwan’s democracy.***
- **14 November 2025:** U.S. Department of Justice announces nationwide actions to combat illicit DPRK government revenue generation.
  - **Bottom-line:** the Justice Department announced five guilty pleas and more than \$15 million in civil forfeiture actions against the DPRK’s remote information technology (IT) work and virtual currency heist schemes — schemes the DPRK uses to fund its illicit weapons program and other priorities in violation of sanctions.
    - **References:**
      - [U.S. Department of Justice, Justice Department Announces Nationwide Actions to Combat Illicit North Korean Government Revenue Generation \(Press Release, Nov. 14, 2025\)](#)
    - **Key Points:**
      - In one case, facilitators in the United States and Ukraine assisted North Korean actors with obtaining remote IT employment with U.S. companies, providing their own, false, or stolen identities, and hosting U.S. victim company-provided laptops at residences across the United States to create the false appearance that the IT workers were working domestically.
        - In total, these defendants’ fraudulent employment schemes impacted more than 136 U.S. victim companies, generated more than \$2.2 million in revenue for the DPRK regime, and compromised the identities of more than 18 U.S. persons.
      - In another case, a North Korean military hacking group known to the private sector as Advanced Persistent Threat 38 (APT38) carried out multimillion-dollar virtual currency heists at four overseas virtual currency platforms in 2023.
        - While APT38 actors continued to launder their ill-gotten gains for these heists, the U.S. government froze and seized more than \$15 million worth of



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virtual currency that it now seeks to forfeit for eventual return to the rightful owners.

- The Department of Justice’s actions to combat both the North Korean IT worker and hacking schemes are the latest in a series of law enforcement actions under a joint National Security Division (NSD) and FBI Cyber and Counterintelligence Divisions effort, the DPRK RevGen: Domestic Enabler Initiative.
  - This effort prioritizes targeting and disrupting the DPRK’s illicit revenue generation schemes and its U.S.-based enablers.
- 2 November 2025: governments of Australia and Indonesia substantively conclude negotiations on a new bilateral treaty on common security.

- **Bottom-line:** Indonesian and Australian leaders said they were close to signing a new bilateral defense treaty which will reportedly commit the countries to consult each other if either country is threatened.

- **References:**

- [Indonesia and Australia are close to signing a new defense treaty \(AP, Nov. 11, 2025\)](#)

- **Key Points:**

- The leaders hope to sign the completed treaty in January 2026.
- According to Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese: ***“This treaty will commit Australia and Indonesia to consult at a leader and ministerial level on a regular basis on matters of security, to identify and undertake mutually beneficial security activities, and if either or both countries’ security is threatened, to consult and consider what measures may be taken either individually or jointly, to deal with those threats.”***



- 15 November 2025: new article details China’s increasingly destabilizing lawfare in the South China Sea.
  - **Bottom-line:** a new article in The Diplomat ***details “China’s systematic efforts to promote legal counterfactuals that undermine established international law in order to complement and support its South China Sea agenda.”***

- **References:**

- [Jacqueline Espenilla, China’s Upgraded Lawfare in the South China Sea \(The Diplomat, Nov. 15, 2025\)](#)

- **Key Points:**

- According to the article, China’s lawfare in the South China Sea is not only about achieving coercive and destabilizing operational objectives — it is also about attempting to delegitimize the actions of the Philippines while tying up the time and resources of the Philippines.
- The author writes:  
“Despite China’s clear violations of international law and custom, it still insists on employing lawfare to claim that Philippine behavior in and around Scarborough Shoal and the Spratlys is provocative and dangerous, while doubling down on the claim that it was effectively forced to ‘take all necessary measures in accordance with international law’ to respond. China’s assertions are, however, non-specific and deliberately vague. They are not anchored on any particular provision of international law. In other words, ***the apparent goal of these claims is simply to muddy the legal water and undermine the Philippine response.***”