



UNCLASSIFIED

USINDOPACOM Legal Vigilance Update

Issue #38, 3 July 2025

PREVAIL

Teammates,

Happy Independence Day! Below please find the 38th 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:

"We remain seriously concerned about the situation in the East China Sea and South China Sea. We reiterate our strong opposition to any unilateral actions that seek to change the status quo by force or coercion. **We express our serious concerns regarding dangerous and provocative actions, including interference with offshore resource development, the repeated obstruction of the freedoms of navigation and overflight, and the dangerous maneuvers by military aircraft and coast guard and maritime militia vessels, especially the unsafe use of water cannons and ramming or blocking actions in the South China Sea.** These actions threaten peace and stability in the region. We are seriously concerned by the militarization of disputed features. **We emphasize the importance of upholding freedom of navigation and overflight, other lawful uses of the sea, and unimpeded commerce consistent with international law, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).** We affirm that maritime disputes must be resolved peacefully and in accordance with international law, and reiterate that the award rendered by the Arbitral Tribunal on July 12, 2016 is a significant milestone and the basis for peacefully resolving disputes between the parties."

[*Joint Statement from Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting \(U.S. Department of State, Jul. 1 25\)*](#)

- **1 July 2025:** Quad Foreign Ministers meet for 10th time, reaffirming commitment to maritime and transnational security.

- **Bottom-line:** the foreign ministers of Australia, India, Japan, and the United States reaffirmed their commitment to "a free and open Indo-Pacific" and announced a new slate of cooperative initiatives across maritime security, economic resilience, and emerging technology—all while expressing strong opposition to "unilateral actions that seek to change the status quo by force or coercion."

- **References:**

- [*2025 Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting – Fact Sheet \(U.S. Dep't of State, Jul. 1, 2025\)*](#)

- **Key Points:**

- The Quad Foreign Ministers stated:

We underscore our commitment to defending the rule of law, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. As four leading maritime nations in the Indo-Pacific, we are united in our conviction that peace and stability in the maritime domain underpin the security and prosperity of the region. We are committed to a region where all countries are free from coercion and



UNCLASSIFIED

strongly oppose any unilateral actions that seek to change the status quo by force or coercion.

- The Ministers also affirmed their commitment to several important new initiatives, including:
 1. Expansion of maritime law enforcement cooperation with the region—through initiatives such as the Quad-at-Sea Ship Observer Mission, the Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness, and the Maritime Initiative for Training in the Indo-Pacific—which will support efforts to curtail illicit maritime activity, including piracy, drug trafficking, infringements on border security, and illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing;
 2. Strengthening of energy security across the Indo-Pacific and promotion of resilient supply chains and quality infrastructure projects that are transparent and secure—including the Quad Critical Minerals Initiative, the Quad Ports of the Future Partnership, and the Quad Partnership on Cable Connectivity and Resilience;
 3. Advancement of secure and trusted information and communications technology infrastructure while expanding work on artificial intelligence, semiconductors, technical standards, biotechnology, and cybersecurity—applying lessons learned from the Open Radio Access Network (Open RAN) deployment in Palau, and continuing the Advancing Innovations for Empowering NextGen Agriculture (AI-ENGAGE) initiative and the Quad STEM Fellowship.

- **30 June 2025:** China sanctions key Philippine lawmaker who authored Philippine Maritime Zones Act.
 - ***Bottom-line: in a coercive act aimed at punishing lawful assertions of maritime sovereignty, China announced sanctions against former Philippine Senator Francis Tolentino—one of the principal authors of the Philippines’ Maritime Zones Act (MZA).*** The move underscores China’s continued use of intimidation to dissuade Indo-Pacific nations from aligning domestic legislation with international law.

- References:

- [Huizhong Wu, China sanctions former Filipino lawmaker who defended Philippines’ South China Sea claims \(AP News, Jun. 30 2025\)](#)

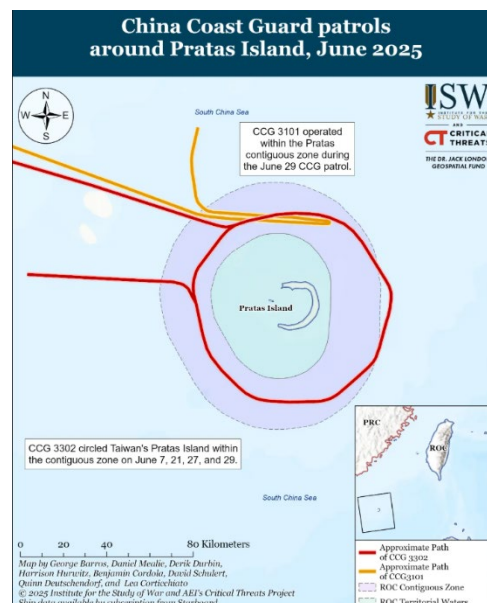
- Key points:

- China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced it had barred Senator Tolentino from entering China, Hong Kong, and Macao, accusing him of “malicious words and deeds” and undermining China-Philippines relations.
- The sanctions were in direct response to Tolentino’s role in drafting the Philippine Maritime Zones Act and the Philippine Archipelagic Sea Lanes Act, which define the Philippines internal waters, archipelagic waters, territorial sea, contiguous zone, exclusive economic zone, and continental shelf in line with UNCLOS.
- Tolentino responded defiantly, calling the sanctions “a badge of honor” and declaring that “no foreign power can silence him.” He added: “Any objections from China must be met with unwavering defense of our sovereign rights and adherence to lawful arbitration outcomes.”
- The United States [welcomed the enactment of the MZA](#), calling it a “routine matter” that “aligns Philippine domestic laws with the 1982 Law of the Sea Convention and the 2016 Arbitral Tribunal ruling.”



UNCLASSIFIED

- *The United States values Philippine leadership in upholding international law, particularly in the South China Sea—and China’s targeting of Philippine lawmakers for codifying international law into domestic statute exemplifies its coercive approach to suppressing lawful maritime claims.*
- 30 June 2025: CEPA report warns of deepening China-Russia convergence in foreign information manipulation operations.
 - **Bottom-line:** a new report by the Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA) highlights the **growing alignment between China and Russia in foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI) campaigns that exploit democratic openness** to undermine U.S. global leadership, NATO cohesion, and Indo-Pacific partnerships.
 - References:
 - [Tamás Matura, China–Russia Convergence in Foreign Information Manipulation \(CEPA, Jun. 30, 2025\)](#)
 - [U.S. Department of State, Framework to Counter Foreign State Information Manipulation \(2024\)](#)
 - [European External Action Service \(EEAS\), Report on FIMI Threats \(Mar. 2025\)](#)
 - Key points:
 - China and Russia, while historically operating distinct disinformation playbooks (e.g., China’s “three warfares” doctrine vs. Russia’s Soviet-style active measures), now regularly amplify one another’s anti-Western narratives—particularly during crises like COVID-19, Ukraine, or Taiwan tensions.
 - Their state media (e.g., CGTN, RT, Sputnik, Global Times) echo each other’s false and misrepresentative messaging.
 - In Latin America, Africa, and Southeast Asia, China and Russia’s information operations increasingly aim to weaken U.S. influence by leveraging local media ecosystems and exploiting anti-U.S. sentiment.
 - Taiwan has been a key target: China’s 2025 disinformation campaign produced over 2.1 million instances of false or biased content in January alone, with Russia politically endorsing Beijing’s misrepresentative claims over Taiwan.
 - The report concludes that while evidence of operational collusion is limited, **China and Russia’s aligned goals in weakening U.S. alliances and norms constitute a significant and coordinated threat to global information integrity.**
- June 2025: China expands “Kinmen model” of coercive patrols to Taiwan-occupied Pratas Island amid intensifying gray zone pressure.
 - **Bottom-line:** China’s Coast Guard (CCG) has extended its coercive maritime patrol model—previously centered on Kinmen—to waters surrounding Pratas Island, forming part of China’s broader campaign to normalize gray zone coercion and intimidate Taiwan and other actors in the region.
 - References:
 - [Institute for the Study of War, China-Taiwan Weekly Update \(Jul. 3, 2025\)](#)
 - Key points:
 - China Coast Guard ship 3302 patrolled Pratas Island on June 7, 21, 27, and 29, each time loitering within 12 to 24 nautical miles for 24 hours and completely circling the island multiple times in the first three patrols. On



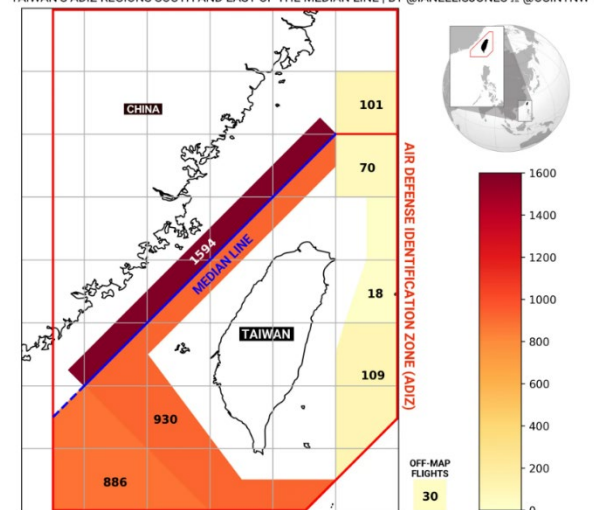
UNCLASSIFIED

June 29, a second CCG vessel confronted a responding Taiwanese Coast Guard ship, suggesting coordinated gray zone pressure.

- Taiwan maintains a Coast Guard base on Pratas, a Taiwan-occupied high-tide elevation in the northern South China Sea.
- CCG 3302 has previously been involved in aggressive acts against Philippine vessels near Scarborough Reef, including reckless and irresponsible ramming and water cannoning.
- This marks the first time in 2025 the PRC has systematically patrolled waters around Pratas.
- In parallel, the CCG patrolled the waters around Kinmen four times in June, continuing the monthly tempo established after Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te's May 2024 inauguration. Since February 2024, the CCG has conducted 77 patrols around Kinmen.
- Meanwhile, PLA activity in Taiwan's ADIZ remains at elevated levels. In June alone, the PLA conducted 356 air sorties into Taiwan's ADIZ and across the Taiwan Strait median line—which is not a legally binding demarcation, but has served as a practical tool to prevent escalation. Since May 2024, average monthly ADIZ flights reached 328.6, more than double the previous two-year average.
- China's destabilizing activities collectively form a deliberate gray zone strategy to unilaterally change the status quo, stretch Taiwan's defense posture, and degrade regional threat awareness.***

CHINESE PLA AIR ACTIVITY AROUND TAIWAN | 1H2025

2,750+ PLA AIRCRAFT DETECTED AROUND TAIWAN IN THE FIRST HALF OF 2025 | NEARLY 2,000 ENTERED TAIWAN'S ADIZ REGIONS SOUTH AND EAST OF THE MEDIAN LINE | BY @IANELLISJONES x @OSINTNW



SOURCE: TAIWAN MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE (MONDEFENSE) | DATA FROM 1 JANUARY TO 30 JUNE 2025 | NOTE: AIRCRAFT OFFER FLY THROUGH MULTIPLE ADIZ ZONES, AND DUE TO REPORTING LIMITATIONS AND OVERLAP, NUMBERS REFLECT SORTIES THAT ORIGINATED IN AND QUANTIFIABLY FLEW INTO THE REGION | BOUNDARIES APPROX. | VISIT ISJMEDIA.COM FOR DATABASE



Chinese Coast Guard (CCG) Incursions into Kinmen Restricted Waters



About the Kinmen Islands

Kinmen is a Taiwan-controlled island group and county located three kilometers (1.9 miles) from the PRC's coast. The PRC claims the islands as its own, and its coast guard has regularized incursions around the island since February 2024.

Taiwan does not claim any territorial waters around Kinmen partly due to its proximity to the PRC, but it designates "prohibited" and "restricted" waters around Kinmen which it treats as equivalent to territorial waters and a contiguous zone, respectively. Kinmen is home to about 140,000 people, including about 3,000 garrisoned soldiers.

CCG Incursion Frequency in Kinmen Waters



Restricted and Prohibited Waters around Taiwan's Kinmen Islands



Map by George Barros, Daniel Meale, Derek Durbin, Harrison Harwitz, Benjamin Cordoba, and David Schubert
© 2025 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

History

Feb. 14, 2024 – A fishing boat capsized in Kinmen's territorial waters as it was fleeing from a Taiwanese Coast Guard inspection, killing two PRC nationals.
Feb. 18, 2024 – The CCG announced that it will conduct regular inspections in waters around Kinmen.
July 30, 2024 – The PRC and Taiwan successfully negotiated a resolution to the February 14 capsizing incident. The PRC returned Taiwanese fishermen it had detained but continued regular incursions into waters around Kinmen.

Sources: Taiwan CGA, ISW's China-Taiwan Weekly Updates



UNCLASSIFIED

- 23 June 2025: United States House of Representatives passes bill that supports Taiwan's return to the International Monetary Fund (IMF).
 - **Bottom-line:** the U.S. House of Representatives unanimously passed the Taiwan Non-Discrimination Act (H.R. 910), which stipulates that the U.S. treasury secretary (who also serves as the U.S. governor to the IMF) “must advocate for...Taiwan’s admission into the IMF as a member.”
 - References:
 - [H.R.910 - Taiwan Non-Discrimination Act of 2025 \(119th Congress, Congress.gov, 2025-2026\)](#)
 - [U.S. House passes bill to support Taiwan rejoining IMF \(Focus Taiwan, Jun. 24, 2025\)](#)
 - Key points:
 - One of the bill’s initiators, Rep. Young Kim (R-Cal), stated: “We cannot be complicit as international organizations cede leverage to Beijing and silence Taiwan's voice.”
 - The U.S. has [consistently supported Taiwan’s meaningful participation](#) in international organizations, including membership where applicable.

Finally, **looking ahead:**

- 7 July 2025: CSIS will host a webcast to explore how the events of ***China’s 709 Crackdown*** continue to shape Chinese society, politics, and legal institutions.
 - **Bottom-line:** starting on July 9, 2015, Chinese authorities detained hundreds of human rights lawyers and advocates, many of whom received long prison sentences, in what became known as the 709 Crackdown—in this CSIS-hosted webcast, leading scholars and practitioners will reflect on rule of law in China, the country's rights protection movement, and what we can learn from 709 in understanding today's China.
 - References:
 - [Rule of Law in China, 10 Years after the 709 Crackdown \(CSIS Webcast, Jul. 7, 2025, 1400 to 1500 EDT\)](#)
 - Key points:
 - A [2020 congressional report](#) stated that “[f]ive years after the 709 Crackdown, lawyers continue to face repression, intimidation and punishment for attempting to protect human rights in China.”
 - Click [here](#) to learn more about the event and to register.