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Subject: INDOPACOM Legal Vigilance Update #28 (17 Apr 2025)
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Teammates,

Below please find the 28th edition of INDOPACOM's Legal Vigilance Update.

- **April 2025: new report details “Chinese Communist Party Lawfare and Economic Coercion Against Taiwan.”**
 - **Bottom-line:** a new publication by the Global Taiwan Institute (GTI) “examines the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) use of non-lethal political warfare through lawfare and economic coercion—which point to a new phase in the PRC’s political warfare campaigns to subjugate and assert gradual political control over Taiwan through economic integration and manipulation of legal narrative.”
 - **References:**
 - [Russell Hsiao and Benjamin Sando, Chinese Communist Party Lawfare and Economic Coercion Against Taiwan \(Global Taiwan Institute, Apr. 2025\)](#)
 - **Key points:**
 - The report details the CCP’s intensifying lawfare campaign and attempts to extend “the long arm of the CCP.”
 - According to the report, CCP lawfare “includes the application of legal and law enforcement instruments intended to enforce and in some areas extend the jurisdiction of PRC over Taiwan, while limiting the effective jurisdiction of the Taiwan authorities.”
 - ***The report examines three features of what it calls China’s new lawfare campaign:***
 - ***the application of the Anti-Secession Law and other Chinese domestic laws;***
 - ***China’s attempts to distort UN General Assembly Resolution in an effort to establish its “One-China Principle” as a matter of international law;***
 - ***China’s misuse of law enforcement mechanisms and instruments to contest and expand its territorial jurisdiction over Taiwan.***
 - The report concludes that “[t]he intensification of non-military measures both in the legal and economic space broadly indicates a significant shift in Beijing’s overall approach from one of deterring Taiwan’s independence to compelling its unification with the PRC.”
 - The document is the fifth and final installment in GTI’s “Counter Ideological Work and Political Warfare” research series, a collection of GTI policy reports on the means and methods employed in the CCP’s coercive and subversive campaign of political warfare directed against Taiwan.
 - ***Note***—on April 24 from 1200 to 1400 EDT, GTI will hold an in-

person and [webcast seminar titled “Enhancing US-Taiwan Cooperation in Countering the CCP’s Ideological Work and Political Warfare.”](#) This event is the culmination of the five-part series of GTI research reports on CCP political warfare.

- 17 April 2025: Chinese satellite company is found to be directly supporting Iran-backed Houthi terrorist attacks on U.S. interests.
 - **Bottom-line:** the U.S. Department of State confirmed reports that ***China-based satellite company Chang Guang Satellite Technology Co. Ltd. (CGSTL) is directly supplying imagery to Iran-backed Houthi terrorist attacks against U.S. and international vessels in the Red Sea, threatening freedom of navigation and security/prosperity for all nations.***
 - References:
 - [Tammy Bruce, U.S. Department of State Spokesperson, Department Press Briefing – April 17, 2025](#)
 - [Demetri Sevastopulo, US says Chinese firm is helping Houthis target American warships \(Financial Times, Apr. 17, 2025\)](#)
 - Key points:
 - U.S. officials confirmed that CGSTL, a satellite imagery provider that is deeply embedded in China’s military-civil fusion ecosystem, has been supplying the Iran-backed Houthi terrorists in Yemen with imagery used to target U.S. warships and merchant vessels in the Red Sea.
 - A Department of State spokesperson said: “it is clear that Beijing and China-based companies provide key economic and technical support to regimes like Russia, North Korea, and Iran and its proxies. The CCP continues to enable these regimes, whether it be through the provision of dual-use items Russia needs to sustain its war in Ukraine, North Korea’s ballistic missile development, or Iran’s support of terrorism across the Middle East.”
 - The Department of State stated that ***“[CGSTL’s] actions and Beijing’s support of the company, even after our private engagements with them, is yet another example of China’s empty claims to support peace.”***
 - According to the Financial Times, “CGSTL has previously come under U.S. scrutiny, and was among groups hit by sanctions in 2023 for allegedly providing high-resolution satellite imagery to Wagner Group, the Russian mercenary army that helped President Vladimir Putin prosecute his full-scale invasion of Ukraine.”
- 15 April 2025: China Coast Guard (CCG) again engages in reckless seamanship when operating in the vicinity of the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) in the South China Sea.
 - **Bottom-line:** the Philippines released a video showing a CCG vessel maneuvering dangerously to harass and obstruct a PCG vessel conducting

lawful operations in the Philippines' EEZ.

■ References:

- [Micah McCartney, *Video Shows US Ally's Close Encounter With Chinese Ship* \(Newsweek, Apr. 15, 2025\)](#)
- [Joviland Rita, *China Coast Guard 'dangerously blocked' BRP Cabra near Bajo de Masinloc—PCG* \(GMA News, Apr. 15, 2025\)](#)

■ Key points:

- ***The PCG reported that the CCG vessel Zhongnan maneuvered dangerously close to the BRP Cabra in an attempt to block its path as the BRP Cabra was conducting lawful operations approximately 40 miles south of Scarborough Shoal, in waters within the Philippine EEZ.***
- Imagery of the interaction shows professional bridge-to-bridge communication by the PCG, with the CCG responding with expansive maritime claims that were rejected by the 2016 Arbitral Tribunal.
- This is the second interaction this month in which CCG's *Zhongnan* has engaged in reckless and dangerous maneuvers in the vicinity of the PCG's *BRP Cabra*.
- In March, U.S. Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr., and Philippine Secretary of National Defense Gilberto Teodoro, Jr. [reaffirmed](#) that the U.S.-Philippine Mutual Defense Treaty extends to armed attacks against either country's armed forces, aircraft, and public vessels – including those of their coast guards – anywhere in the South China Sea.

- 14 April 2025: new study highlights expansion of China's dual-use infrastructure in the South Pacific.

- **Bottom-line:** a newly released ***study highlights China's construction of at least 50 dual-use infrastructure projects across the South Pacific, renewing concerns that China could further expand its destabilizing influence and behavior deeper into the Pacific.***

■ References:

- [Dr. Domingo I-Kwei Yang, *China's Dual-Use Infrastructure in the Pacific* \(SSANSE Project, Apr. 14, 2025\)](#)
- [Didi Tatlow and John Feng, *How China's Military is Quietly Gaining Control of the Pacific* \(Newsweek, Apr. 15, 2025\)](#)

■ Key points:

- The study identified at least 50 strategic nodes constructed by China-based firms in 11 Pacific Island nations. Projects include deep-water ports, airfields capable of hosting large People's Liberation Army (PLA) aircraft, and communications infrastructure

with latent military utility.

- China frames the projects as development assistance funded under its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), but the report highlights that the projects form a logistics corridor that could potentially enable the PLA to project military and political influence deeper into the Pacific.
 - The report finds that ***“China aims to establish a Southern Link, connecting Asia and South America via Pacific strategic infrastructure hubs,” and that “control over Pacific ports, airstrips, and [information and communications network] systems could serve dual-use purposes, enabling transit, logistics, and expanded influence in the U.S. backyard.”***
 - According to the study, “[b]y embedding military and intelligence capabilities into seemingly civilian developments, China is reshaping the geopolitical landscape of the Indo-Pacific,” creating the risk of “potentially restricting U.S. and allied military mobility in the region.”
 - In a separate report, [CSIS recently wrote](#) that “China’s use of economic promises to shape Pacific security architecture and erode democratic norms poses a direct threat to the national security of all Pacific nations—including the United States.”
- 16 April 2025: new report suggests China Coast Guard (CCG) increasingly operating under PLA control.
 - **Bottom-line:** Taiwan authorities reportedly observed the PLA’s Eastern Theater Command exercising operational control over the CCG during April 2025 exercises, supporting the assessment that ***China’s gray zone strategy is to use the cover of the CCG’s law enforcement facade to conduct what are in fact coercive military activities intended to threaten and intimidate Taiwan.***
 - References:
 - [Kitsch Liao, China is militarizing its coast guard against Taiwan. Here’s how Taipei and its allies can respond \(The Atlantic Council, Apr. 16, 2025\)](#)
 - Key points:
 - Taiwan’s Coast Guard reported that the PLA Eastern Theater Command maintained operational control over CCG units during PLA exercises in April 2025.
 - In 2018, the CCG underwent a [reorganization](#), moving from China’s State Oceanic Administration to the People’s Armed Police (PAP). The PAP reports directly to the Central Military Commission (CMC).
 - According to [DoD’s 2024 China Military Power Report](#), China uses the CCG as the frontline force in maritime coercion campaigns

while leveraging the PLAN as overwatch to deter rival claimants and provide an immediate escalation option if needed.

- ***China seeks to develop and exploit a perception of the CCG as a civilian law enforcement agency, seeking to cloak its coercive maritime operations with a veneer of legal legitimacy and mask aggressive CCG actions in disputed waters—such as harassment, ramming, and obstruction of lawful activities—as routine law enforcement.***
- 14 April 2025: U.S. and Republic of Korea expand strategic space cooperation at Fourth Civil Space Dialogue.
 - **Bottom-line:** the United States and the Republic of Korea (ROK) convened the fourth U.S.-ROK Civil Space Dialogue in Washington, D.C., announcing significant advancements in bilateral space cooperation.
 - References:
 - [*Joint Statement from the Governments of the United States of America and the Republic of Korea at the United States-Republic of Korea Civil Space Dialogue \(Department of State, Apr. 14, 2025\)*](#)
 - Key points:
 - ***Noting that the U.S.-ROK Alliance stands as the linchpin of peace, security, and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula and across the Indo-Pacific, the two sides committed to strengthening the U.S.-ROK Alliance through further space cooperation, including joint research in space exploration and science, Earth observation, and enhanced regulatory cooperation.***
 - The U.S. and ROK stated that they “intend to enhance our close cooperation on advancing the peaceful exploration and use of space at the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UN COPUOS), in the Artemis Accords signatory group, in global fora such as the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) and Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS), in regional fora such as the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum (APRSAF) and in trilateral U.S.-ROK-Japan civil and commercial space cooperation.”
 - The two sides plan to continue to meet to share standards and best practices for leveraging space situational awareness capabilities to improve spaceflight safety and sustainability, with both sides recognizing the importance of improved international coordination on this issue, including discussion of data and information sharing principles and engagement with private sector space actors.
 - To enhance U.S.-ROK Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA), the two sides discussed how to cooperate in providing satellite data for securing safe maritime transportation routes and addressing various maritime security threats, as well as how to enhance

cooperation on information and infrastructure between the U.S. National Maritime Intelligence-Integration Office and the Korea Coast Guard.

- 16 April 2025: U.S. sanctions second China-based refinery for Iranian oil trade.
 - **Bottom-line:** *the United States sanctioned Shandong Shengxing Chemical Co., Ltd, a China-based “teapot” refinery, for purchasing over \$1 billion worth of Iranian crude oil, which the Iranian regime uses to support its terrorist proxies and partners.*
 - References:
 - [Tammy Bruce, Sanctioning a China-Based “Teapot” Refinery to Pressure Iran Further \(Department of State, Apr. 16, 2025\)](#)
 - [U.S. Department of the Treasury Press Release, Treasury Increases Pressure on Chinese Importers of Iranian Oil \(Apr. 16, 2025\)](#)
 - Key points:
 - Shandong Shengxing is the second China-based independent refinery sanctioned by the United States since the National Security Presidential Memorandum-02 was issued on February 4, 2025.
 - The action is being taken pursuant to [Executive Order \(E.O.\) 13902](#).
 - The refinery facilitated over \$1 billion in transactions for Iranian oil, including from a front company for Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force (IRGC-QF), directly supporting Iran’s petroleum sector in violation of U.S. sanctions.
 - The U.S. also imposed sanctions on several companies and vessels involved in transporting Iranian crude oil to China as part of Iran’s “shadow fleet.”
 - The U.S. reiterated its objective of reducing Iranian oil exports, including to China, to zero and to hold all enablers of sanctions evasion accountable.
- 16 April 2025: U.S. and Indonesia reaffirm strategic partnership and South China Sea cooperation.
 - **Bottom-line:** Secretary of State Marco Rubio met with Indonesian Foreign Minister Sugiono to reaffirm the U.S.-Indonesia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.
 - References:
 - [Secretary Rubio’s Meeting with Indonesian Foreign Minister Sugiono, \(Department of State, Apr. 16, 2025\)](#)
 - Key points:
 - **Secretary Rubio and Foreign Minister Sugiono underscored shared support for a free and open Indo-Pacific, focusing on cooperation to uphold freedom of navigation and overflight in the South China Sea**

consistent with international law.

- Secretary Rubio highlighted the role of the maximum pressure campaign on Iran's flow of revenue used to finance terrorism, ballistic missile production, and other destabilizing activities.

Thank you for your continued participation in our Counter-Lawfare community of interest.
V/r Ian

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