

The China–Taiwan Weekly Update



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The China–Taiwan Weekly Update is a joint product from the Institute for the Study of War and the American Enterprise Institute. The update supports the ISW–AEI Coalition Defense of Taiwan project, which assesses Chinese campaigns against Taiwan, examines alternative strategies for the United States and its allies to deter the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) aggression, and—if necessary—defeat the People’s Liberation Army (PLA). The update focuses on the Chinese Communist Party’s paths to controlling Taiwan and cross–Taiwan Strait developments.

Correction: We have updated the number of PLA planes and ships involved on the second day of last week’s joint military exercises around Taiwan on May 23–24 to reflect that 62 PLA aircraft and 27 PLAN vessels were operating around Taiwan on May 24.

Key Takeaways

- **Tens of thousands of demonstrators gathered outside the Legislative Yuan on May 21 and May 24 to protest the advancement of a controversial legislative reform bill in the Legislative Yuan.**
- **The PRC launched two days of joint military exercises around Taiwan to “punish” Taiwan for the election of President Lai Ching-te and what the PRC deemed separatist “provocations” in Lai’s inauguration speech. PRC and ROC media cited analysts who said that the exercise’s name, Joint Sword 2024A, suggests that there may be additional exercises in the series later this year.**
- **The Fujian branch of the Chinese Coast Guard (CCG) conducted “law enforcement” drills that entered restricted waters around the Taiwanese Wuqiu and Dongyin islands. The CCG coordinated the drills with PLA joint exercises on May 23 and May 24. The CCG also carried out drills east of Taiwan on May 24.**
- **The Chinese Coast Guard (CCG) released new law enforcement procedures on May 15 likely as part of PRC efforts to assert territorial claims in the South China Sea.**

Taiwan

Tens of thousands of demonstrators gathered outside the Legislative Yuan on May 21 and May 24 to protest the advancement of a controversial legislative reform bill in the Legislative Yuan. The Legislative Yuan (LY) began voting on the joint Kuomintang (KMT) and Taiwan People’s Party (TPP) reform bill on May 17, which would grant the LY the ability to call on anyone to testify before an investigative committee, establish penalties for perceived non-compliance or dishonesty in responses, confirm political appointments, and mandate the president to give an annual national address on the state of the union.[1] The “Contempt of Congress” aspect of the bill is a focal point of the controversy, as it entails punishment such as fines and jail time for individuals whose compliance with LY investigators’ inquiries is deemed unsatisfactory, including government officials. Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) legislators opposed the reform bill in the LY on May 17, which climaxed in a physical confrontation between members of the legislature. Mass demonstrations took place outside the LY on May 21 and 24 as the general assembly continued voting on the bill’s provisions.[2] The LY is set to continue voting on the bill on May 28.

DPP legislators have criticized the bill as unconstitutional and labeled it a political tool that the KMT and TPP will abuse to expand their power. DPP Caucus Whip Ker Chien-ming articulated the threat that the bill poses to the executive branch, calling it a “limitless expansion of powers” and a “constitutional monster” whose purpose was to weaponize the legislature.[3] KMT Caucus Deputy Secretary-General Lin Szu-ming, one of the main authors of the reform bills, earlier highlighted the LY’s need to possess “strong weapons” to supervise the government.[4] DPP Caucus Secretary-General Rosalia Wu stated on April 1 that the DPP will fight against the law with all its strength, and would request action from the justices of the Constitutional Court if the bill passed the LY.[5]

The DPP China Affairs Department highlighted the Contempt of Congress aspect of the bill among a series of KMT actions that benefitted CCP interests.[6] DPP legislator Puma Shen criticized the Contempt of Congress law during LY proceedings on May 24 for granting legislators excessive penal authority and claimed that the law could be used arbitrarily to punish those with opposing views, including individuals that the CCP might accuse of separatism.[7] Ker claimed that the bill amounted to Taiwan’s “Hong Kong-ization,” referring to the territory’s democratic backsliding and political assimilation with the PRC.[8] The DPP argues that the law carries national security risks, as military or government officials could be compelled to disclose confidential information during questioning from an LY investigative committee or face indictment under the law.[9] The bill includes a stipulation that exempts sensitive national security information from disclosure.[10]

The DPP and protestors are also condemning the KMT and TPP for using opaque and undemocratic methods to advance the reforms in the legislature. The DPP accused the KMT of automatically

advancing the bill to the general assembly without proper review in the relevant committee on April 15.[11] The KMT and TPP introduced an amended version of the bill on the morning of May 17, which the parties did not make available to the public or disseminate to the general assembly before initiating voting.[12] TPP Caucus Whip Huang Kuo-chang stated in an interview on May 17 that the amended version was “top secret.”[13] Huang later pushed back against the DPP and protesters’ accusations of opacity and circumvention of legislative procedures and criticized the DPP for using violence to obstruct the bill’s advancement.[14]

KMT Chairman Eric Chu expressed the party’s strong resolve to achieve its political objectives in defiance of what it views as an uncooperative DPP. Chu stated on May 19 that the KMT will no longer be “restrained and courteous” in its fight to achieve reform and invoked the KMT’s mandate to carry out the public’s expectations for reform, which is based on the party’s dominant presence in the LY.[15] Chu criticized the DPP on May 22 for staging the protests to obstruct democracy and the will of the majority.[16] KMT Caucus Whip Fu Kun-chi, who spearheaded the bill’s sponsorship, vowed on May 24 to finalize its passage next week after the LY proceedings continued into the night.[17]

The PRC framed ROC President Lai Ching-te’s inaugural address as hostile and provocative for cross-strait relations. Lai took office on May 20, marking the start of the DPP’s third consecutive term in power. Lai’s inaugural address emphasized the importance of upholding Taiwan’s sovereignty and democracy.[18] PRC Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO) spokesperson Chen Binhua rejected Lai’s assertions of Taiwan’s sovereignty and self-determination as “separatist fallacies” that made clear his desire to realize Taiwan’s formal independence.[19] Chen described Lai as a separatist zealot who poses a danger to cross-strait peace and does not represent mainstream public opinion in Taiwan. Chen criticized countries that sent representatives to attend Lai’s inauguration and warned against foreign interference in Taiwan that violates the recognition of the PRC as the sole government of China.[20] Chen specifically called out the United States for having diplomatic relations and “official exchanges” with Taiwan. There were no official government representatives in the US delegation and the United States does not have official diplomatic relations with Taiwan. PRC Foreign Minister Wang Yi, speaking at a foreign ministers’ summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, stated that nothing can stop the PRC from reunifying with Taiwan, and that “separatists will be nailed to a pillar of shame.”[21]

PRC state broadcaster CCTV claimed widespread disapproval of Lai’s alleged independence-minded rhetoric in Taiwan.[22] The segment featured spokesperson Yu Chih-pin of Taiwan’s New Party, a pro-unification party that grew out of the KMT, who framed the DPP as the antagonist in cross-strait relations and criticized Lai for stating that “neither side of the strait was subordinate to the other.” The piece highlighted a Taiwanese poll released on May 20 that showed more than half of respondents did not have confidence in Lai’s ability to manage cross-strait relations.[23]

China

The PRC launched two days of joint military exercises around Taiwan to “punish” Taiwan for the election of President Lai Ching-te and what the PRC deemed separatist “provocations” in Lai’s inauguration speech. The People’s Liberation Army (PLA) Eastern Theater Command (ETC) carried out two days of joint military exercises around Taiwan on May 23-24. The exercises, titled “Joint Sword 2024A,” took place in nine distinct locations in the waters to the north, south, and east of the main island of Taiwan and around the Taiwanese islands of Kinmen, Matsu, Wuqiu, and Dongyin. ETC spokesperson Senior Colonel Li Xi said that the ETC was organizing services including the army, navy, air force, and rocket force for the joint drills. Li said the drills would focus on joint sea-air combat-readiness patrol, joint seizure of comprehensive battlefield control, and joint precision strikes on key targets. He also said the exercises would involve the patrol of vessels and planes closing in on areas around Taiwan and “integrated operations” inside and outside the island chain to test the joint combat capabilities of the ETC’s forces.[24] The ETC also released a map of the exercises on May 23 that showed PLA Navy (PLAN) warship formations approaching Taiwan from five directions on all sides of the main island.[25]

Taiwan’s Ministry of National Defense (MND) reported 49 PLA aircraft, 19 PLAN vessels, and 7 CCG vessels around Taiwan on May 23, the first day of the joint exercises. 35 of the aircraft crossed the median line of the Taiwan Strait and entered the north, central, and southwest parts of Taiwan’s Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ).[26] The MND reported 62 PLA aircraft and 27 PLAN vessels operating around Taiwan on May 24, the second day. 47 of the aircraft crossed the median line of the Taiwan Strait and entered Taiwan’s southwest, southeast, and eastern ADIZ.[27]

ETC spokesperson Li said the second day of the exercise on May 24 drilled vessel-aircraft coordination, sea assault and land attack, and tested the forces’ combat capabilities including multi-domain coordination and joint strike. PLA Rocket Force units conducted mock fire strikes with modularized long-range rocket systems in eastern Fujian Province, which faces the Taiwan Strait. PLAN warships around Taiwan conducted mock strikes on maritime targets. PLA bombers and fighter jets took off carrying live missiles.[28] The ETC also released a video showing a 3D simulation of strikes on the Taiwanese cities of Taipei, Hualien, and Kaohsiung by PLA air, naval, and rocket forces.[29]

The political purpose of this exercise is to punish Taiwan for its election of Lai as president and what the PRC deemed “provocations” in Lai’s inauguration speech. The exercises began three days after Lai’s inauguration as president of Taiwan. ETC spokesperson Li said that the drills serve as a “strong punishment for the separatist acts of ‘Taiwan independence’ forces” and a “stern warning against the interference and provocation by external forces.”[30] TAO spokesperson Chen Binhua elaborated in stating that the exercise was a punishment for “provocations seeking independence” in Lai’s

inauguration speech on May 20.[31] Ministry of National Defense (MOD) spokesperson Senior Colonel Wu Qian claimed that Lai “seriously challenged the one-China principle, blatantly sold the ‘two-state theory,’ and attempted to ‘seek independence through force’ and ‘seek independence through foreign forces’” as soon as he took office. Wu warned that “every time ‘Taiwan independence’ provokes, our countermeasures will be pushed forward until the complete reunification of the motherland is achieved.”[32]

The exercises also signal a message of deterrence both to Taiwan’s DPP administration and to “external forces” that support Taiwan to not make further moves toward Taiwan’s independence. The military purpose of the exercise is to improve the joint interoperability of various services under the ETC, including joint sea-air patrols, joint battlefield control operations, and joint precision strikes.[33] These capabilities are integral to executing several of the PLA’s joint operational war plans as identified in PLA military texts, including Joint Firepower Strike Operations against Taiwan, Joint Blockade Operations against Taiwan, and Joint Attack Operations against Taiwan.[34]

PRC state media, including Xinhua and Global Times, cited PLA Academy of Military Science (AMS) expert Tong Zhen who said that the exercise demonstrated the PLA’s ability to “strike all directions of the island without any blind spots,” pinning down Taiwan from all sides.[35] PLA National Defense University (NDU) Professor Major General Meng Xiangqing noted in an article in the English-language state newspaper *China Daily* that the Joint Sword 2024A exercises were larger in scale, number of troops, and area covered than previous exercises and made several “breakthroughs.” First, PLA ships reached the Taiwanese outlying islands of Wuqiu and Dongyin for the first time. Second, PLA ships and planes came “as close as ever” to the main island of Taiwan in their combat-readiness patrols. Third, the drill showed joint and integrated operations to seize “comprehensive control of the sea, land, and air,” including cooperation with the Chinese Coast Guard (CCG) and “many new forces” including “network forces, information support forces, and information systems.”[36] Lieutenant Colonel Zhang Chi of the NDU’s Centre of Strategic Studies wrote in the same article that the drills to the north, south, and east of Taiwan have specific meanings. The drills to the north send warning signals to “important political and military targets,” including the ruling DPP, based in Taiwan’s capital Taipei in northern Taiwan. The exercise to the south is a “political attack” and an “economic blockade” of the city of Kaohsiung, which is a DPP stronghold and Taiwan’s largest port as well as an important garrison for Taiwan’s maritime forces. The exercise to the east is aimed at blocking the “lifeline for Taiwan’s energy imports,” a possible escape route for Taiwan’s “independence forces,” and support lines for the United States and allies to aid Taiwan. All these lines rely mainly on the eastern Taiwanese port of Hualien.[37]

The exercises are comparable to the PLA’s large-scale exercises around Taiwan in August 2022 in response to then-US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s visit to Taiwan and the Joint Sword exercises in April 2023 after then-Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen met then-US House Speaker Kevin McCarthy in California. The 2022 exercises featured a larger number of military assets and involved the firing of

ballistic missiles over Taiwan. Those exercises initially lasted five days from August 4-7, with additional drills until August 10.[38] The 2023 exercises lasted three days, compared to the two days of Joint Sword 2024A. The Joint Sword 2024A exercise expanded the area of operation compared to previous joint exercises, however, operating in nine distinct areas including around Taiwan's outlying islands compared to six areas not including outlying islands during 2022. Joint Sword 2024A also came closer to Taiwan's east coast than previous exercises.[39]

The MND condemned the exercises and called them an "irrational provocation" that would destabilize regional peace and security.[40] Taiwan President Lai and representatives of the DPP, KMT, and TPP all condemned the PLA drills.[41]

PRC and ROC media cited analysts who said that the exercise's name, Joint Sword 2024A, suggests that there may be additional exercises in the series later this year. Follow-on exercises would be named Joint Sword 2024B, Joint Sword 2024C, and so on.[42] The PLA held only one Joint Sword exercise in 2023, the first in the series.[43]

The Fujian branch of the Chinese Coast Guard (CCG) conducted "law enforcement" drills that entered restricted waters around the Taiwanese Wuqiu and Dongyin islands. The CCG coordinated the drills with the PLA Joint Sword exercises on May 23 and May 24. The CCG also carried out drills east of Taiwan on May 24. CCG spokesperson Gan Yu announced the drills on May 23 and said they were intended to test the Fujian CCG's joint patrol, rapid response, and emergency handling capabilities. The CCG released maps that showed its patrol routes around the islands. The maps showed a route that passed within 2.8 nautical miles north of Wuqiu and another route that passed within 3.1 nautical miles east and south of Dongyin.[44] The routes entered the "restricted waters" around the islands but not the "prohibited waters." [45] The CCG also conducted patrols in restricted waters around Wuqiu and Dongyin on May 24 but did not release a map that day.[46] Taiwan does not claim territorial waters around Wuqiu and Dongyin partly due to their proximity to the PRC. It instead designates "prohibited" and "restricted" waters around the islands, which it treats as equivalent to "territorial waters" and a "contiguous zone," respectively. The Fujian CCG has conducted similar patrols that intruded into prohibited and restricted waters around the Taiwanese island of Kinmen on multiple occasions since February 2024.[47] The PRC does not recognize any "restricted" or "prohibited" waters around Taiwan's outlying islands.

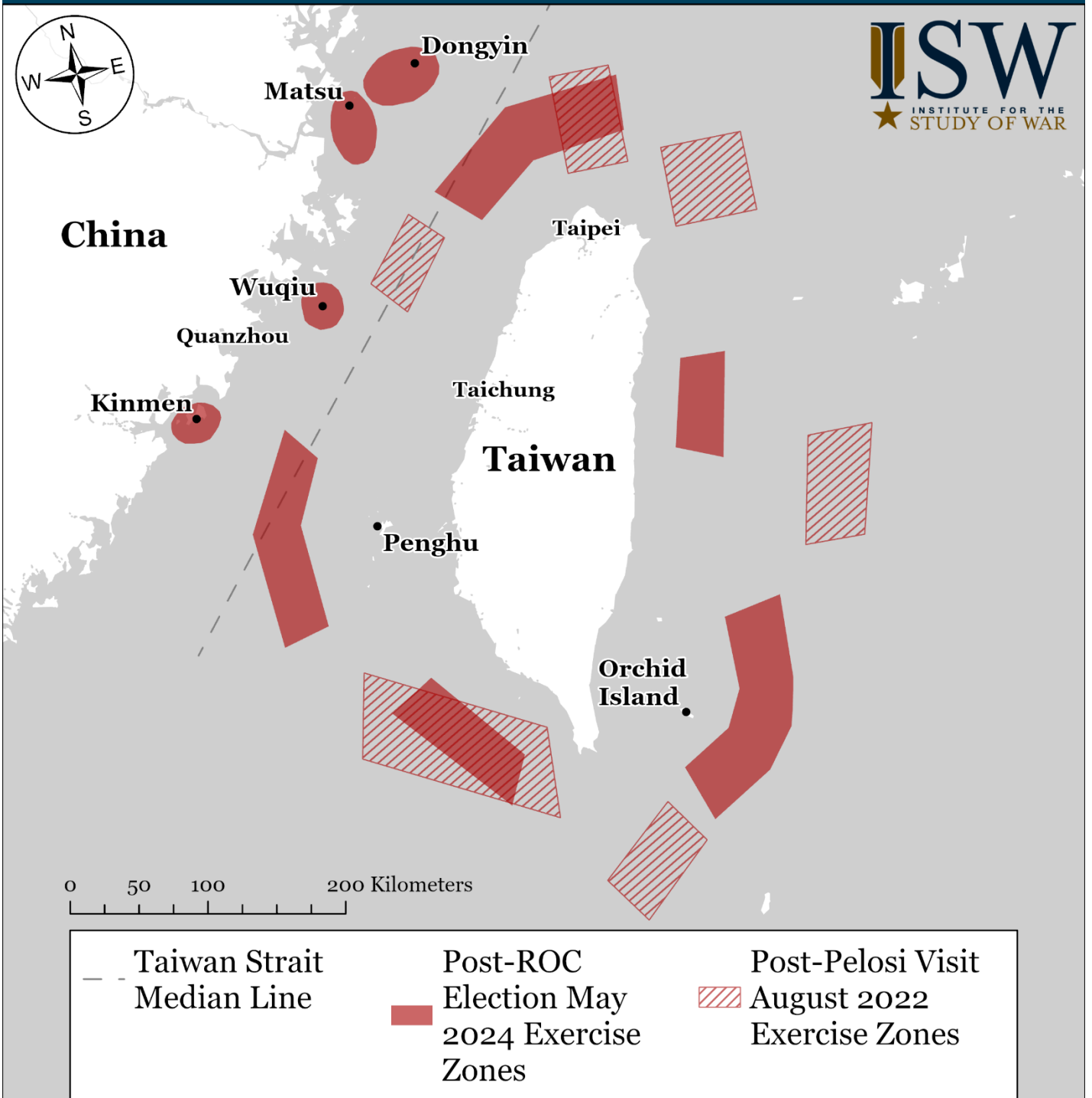
The CCG also carried out law enforcement exercises in waters east of Taiwan on May 24. The exercises focused on training in verification, identification, warning, and expulsion and testing joint patrol and emergency response capabilities. It released photos of the exercises but no map.[48] It is not clear how close the CCG vessels came to Taiwan's coast.

The PRC state-owned tabloid Global Times cited an unnamed "source close to the matter" who said this was the first time CCG vessels had entered the "restricted waters" around Dongyin and Wuqiu. The

source said the exercise and the published maps sent a message of deterrence to Taiwan. The source said the PRC might replicate the “Kinmen model” if the Taiwan government remains “obstinate,” which could include entering the prohibited waters around the Wuqiu and Dongyin islands or boarding and inspecting Taiwanese vessels in the waters around the islands. The source said Wuqiu and Dongyin are of “high strategic importance” and military value because they are close to the mainland PRC, oversee key transportation routes in the Taiwan Strait, and are the front line for Taiwan’s defense operations. The same source also said the CCG patrols showed heightened coastguard-military coordination, as PLA forces concurrently carried out exercises around the islands.[49] PRC authorities did not release maps showing the precise movements of the PLA forces. NDU Professor Major General Meng Xiangqing noted in his *China Daily* article that PLA forces also approached the islands of Dongyin and Wuqiu for the first time during the Joint Sword 2024A exercises. He said the exercises near those islands sent a warning that if “‘Taiwan independence’ forces escalate their provocation, the PLA may enter the ‘prohibited waters to carry out inspections of Taiwan ships in the area and conduct combat-readiness patrols.’”[50] There are no known instances of the PRC using military forces to inspect Taiwanese ships in this way.

Wuqiu and Dongyin are administratively part of Taiwan’s Kinmen and Matsu regions, respectively. The CCG’s patrols around Wuqiu and Dongyin mark the seventh and eighth CCG intrusions into the restricted waters of Kinmen or Matsu in May 2024.[51] The CCG has normalized patrols in restricted waters around the main islands of Kinmen since an incident on February 14 in which two PRC fishermen drowned while fleeing from a Taiwan Coast Guard pursuit.[52] These CCG patrols serve to erode Taiwan’s control over waters around its territory.

PLA Joint Sword 2024A Exercises



Map by Noel Mikkelsen

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Data Source: Taiwanese Central News Agency

The PRC announced new sanctions on three US defense firms over arms sales to Taiwan. The PRC Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) announced that it was adding General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, General Dynamics Land Systems, and Boeing’s Defense, Space & Security unit to an “Unreliable Entity List” for selling arms to Taiwan. MOFCOM made the announcement on May 20, the same day Lai Ching-te was inaugurated as President of Taiwan. The PRC forbids entities on the Unreliable Entity List from conducting export and import business with the PRC and from making new investments in the PRC. The sanctions also ban senior managers of the companies from entering or staying in the PRC. Lockheed Martin and Raytheon’s Missile and Defense division have been on the Unreliable Entity List since February 2023.[53] The PRC previously froze the assets of General Atomics Aeronautical Systems and General Dynamics Land Systems held in the PRC in April 2024. It imposed sanctions on Boeing Defense, Space, and Security President and CEO Ted Colbert in September 2022 over Boeing’s sale of Harpoon missiles to Taiwan.[54]

The PRC opened an anti-dumping investigation against polyoxymethylene (POM) copolymers from the United States, European Union, Japan, and Taiwan. The PRC Ministry of Commerce launched the investigation on May 19 after six major PRC POM copolymer producers applied for the investigation on April 22.[55] POM copolymer, also known as polyformaldehyde copolymer or acetal copolymer, is a thermoplastic resin widely used in various industries ranging from auto parts to electronics.[56] Imports supplied nearly 45 percent of the PRC’s POM copolymer demand in 2022. The EU, Taiwan, Japan, and the United States were the third through sixth largest sources of the material, respectively, in the first quarter of 2024.[57]

PRC state-owned tabloid Global Times denied Western media speculation that the “regular and normal anti-dumping investigation” was retaliatory. It said the application to begin the investigation predated US President Joe Biden’s new tariffs on the PRC and that the broader anti-dumping investigation in this industry actually began in 2016, leading to duties on POM copolymer imports from South Korea, Thailand, and Malaysia in 2017.[58] The article claimed that US media speculation that the investigation was retaliatory shows that the United States fears PRC countermeasures to the new tariffs.[59]

The PRC referenced statements from the UN Special Rapporteur on unilateral coercive measures to bolster its opposition to unilateral Western sanctions. The special rapporteur on the negative impact of the unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights, Alena Douhan, visited the PRC from May 6 to May 17. She met with government departments, enterprises, civil groups, and other entities in Beijing, Shenzhen, and Xinjiang to study the negative impact of unilateral sanctions on the PRC. Douhan concluded that unilateral sanctions against the PRC as well as the “over-compliance” of foreign businesses with those sanctions have harmed the human rights of “vulnerable groups” by increasing unemployment and causing other economic disruptions in affected

regions like Xinjiang. She claimed that any “unilateral sanctions” that are not retaliatory and implemented without authorization of the UN Security Council are illegal. She further said that all secondary sanctions imposed on individuals and entities as punishment for circumventing sanctions regimes on third countries are illegal. She said that unilateral sanctions should not be used as a foreign policy tool and a means of economic coercion.[60]

The PRC is using Douhan’s credentials as a UN expert to strengthen its rhetoric against Western sanctions and human rights narratives. PRC Assistant Foreign Minister Miao Deyu, MFA spokesperson Wang Wenbin, and state media such as Xinhua and Global Times publicized and echoed Douhan’s views that “unilateral coercive measures” against the PRC violate international law and human rights.[61] Wang urged “relevant countries” to immediately lift their “illegal unilateral sanctions.”[62] The claim that unilateral sanctions are illegal and the conflation of economic development with human rights, which are core premises in the special rapporteur’s mandate and reports, parallel longtime CCP rhetoric.[63]

The Special Rapporteur on unilateral coercive measures is not an impartial expert or authority, however, and the PRC may have shaped the outcome of her study to support PRC narratives. The UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) created the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on unilateral coercive measures in 2014 to study the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights and to work with UNHRC and other bodies to minimize the negative effects of unilateral coercive measures.[64] Iran introduced the mandate for the special rapporteur on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.[65] The United States and most of its allies opposed the mandate.[66] A Special Rapporteur is an unpaid independent expert that the UN Human Rights Council appoints to produce reports on a specific theme. Douhan is a professor of international law at Belarus State University who took up the post of Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights in 2020.[67] She has previously urged the lifting of unilateral sanctions on Qatar, Iran, Venezuela, Zimbabwe, and Syria.[68] A 2022 report by the nonprofit UN Watch found that Douhan received a \$200,000 donation from the PRC government in 2021.[69]

The PRC used UN General Assembly Resolution 2758, which admitted the PRC to the UN as the sole representative of China and expelled the ROC from the UN in 1971, to block Taiwan’s participation in the World Health Organization’s 2024 annual assembly. PRC officials including the PRC ambassador to the United Nations and spokespeople for the MFA and TAO have claimed that the resolution confirms the “one China principle” in international law by definitively establishing the PRC as the only legal government of all of China, of which Taiwan is a part.[70] The MFA cited the resolution on May 13 and May 24 when explaining the PRC’s decision to block Taiwan from participating in the World Health Organization’s 2024 World Health Assembly (WHA), which begins on May 27. It argued that because Taiwan is part of China and the PRC is the sole legal representative of China, Taiwan cannot participate in international organizations without permission from the PRC’s central government. It claimed that Taiwan’s DPP government has “stubbornly adhered to the separatist stance of “Taiwan independence”” since it took power in 2016 and thus invalidated the

political basis for Taiwan’s participation in the WHO. [71] The PRC has repeatedly cited Resolution 2758 in its reasoning for blocking Taiwan’s participation in the WHO since 2017.[72] Taiwan participated as an observer in the WHA under the name “Chinese Taipei” during the presidency of Ma Ying-jeou from 2009-2016, however.[73]

PRC officials strongly criticized statements by US officials such as State Department China Coordinator Mark Lambert and various US senators which refuted the PRC’s interpretation of UNGA 2758.[74] An MFA spokesperson claimed on May 20 that “some people in the United States maliciously spread fallacies” in arguing that the UN resolution did not resolve Taiwan’s status and does not prevent Taiwan’s participation in international organizations. The spokesperson said such “absurd and dangerous” arguments “not only challenge China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, but also challenge “international justice and conscience” and the post-war international order.”[75] The same spokesperson claimed on May 15 that the US “distorting and slandering” of UNGA Resolution 2758 showed that the United States uses international law inconsistently to maintain its “hegemony.”[76]

Broader international acceptance of PRC arguments that interpret UNGA Resolution 2758 as an international legal consensus that Taiwan is part of the PRC would serve to further undermine Taiwan’s sovereignty. It would hamper Taiwan’s international participation, lend legitimacy to PRC coercive actions against Taiwan as a “domestic issue,” and lend credence to PRC arguments that the United States and other countries’ engagement with Taiwan without PRC consent is illegal.

The PRC’s use of UNGA 2758 in tandem with the 1992 Consensus to block Taiwan from participating in international organizations could also support its legal argument for its broader effort to legitimize the KMT over the DPP as a negotiating partner on behalf of Taiwan. It did not block Taiwan’s participation in the WHO during the KMT administration of Ma Ying-jeou because Ma and his party officially accept the “1992 Consensus” that Taiwan and mainland China are part of “one China.” The PRC may return to this more permissive policy under the next KMT administration in Taiwan, with the argument that the KMT recognizes the supposed “international legal consensus” of the One China principle and the DPP does not.

PRC Foreign Minister Wang Yi attended the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Foreign Minister’s Summit in Astana, Kazakhstan. The SCO is a Eurasian regional cooperation organization that the PRC and Russia established in 2001 with several central Asian countries. It now also includes India, Pakistan, and Iran.[77] The Foreign Minister’s meeting was primarily in preparation for a full SCO summit in July. Wang called on the SCO to bolster security cooperation, information sharing, joint operations, and personnel training. He accused “a few countries” of pursuing hegemony, forming “small circles,” interfering with and suppressing other countries, “decoupling,” and even fueling the “three forces” in the region with the aim of suppressing the strategic autonomy of the Global South.[78] The “three forces” is a reference to terrorism, separatism, and religious extremism. Wang did not specify which countries he was talking about, but most of his rhetoric echoed criticisms the PRC commonly directs at the United States. Wang met individually with many other foreign

ministers at the summit including Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.[79] Lavrov confirmed that Russian President Vladimir Putin and CCP General Secretary Xi Jinping would meet again at the SCO meeting in Astana on July 3-4.[80]

Southeast

Asia

Philippines

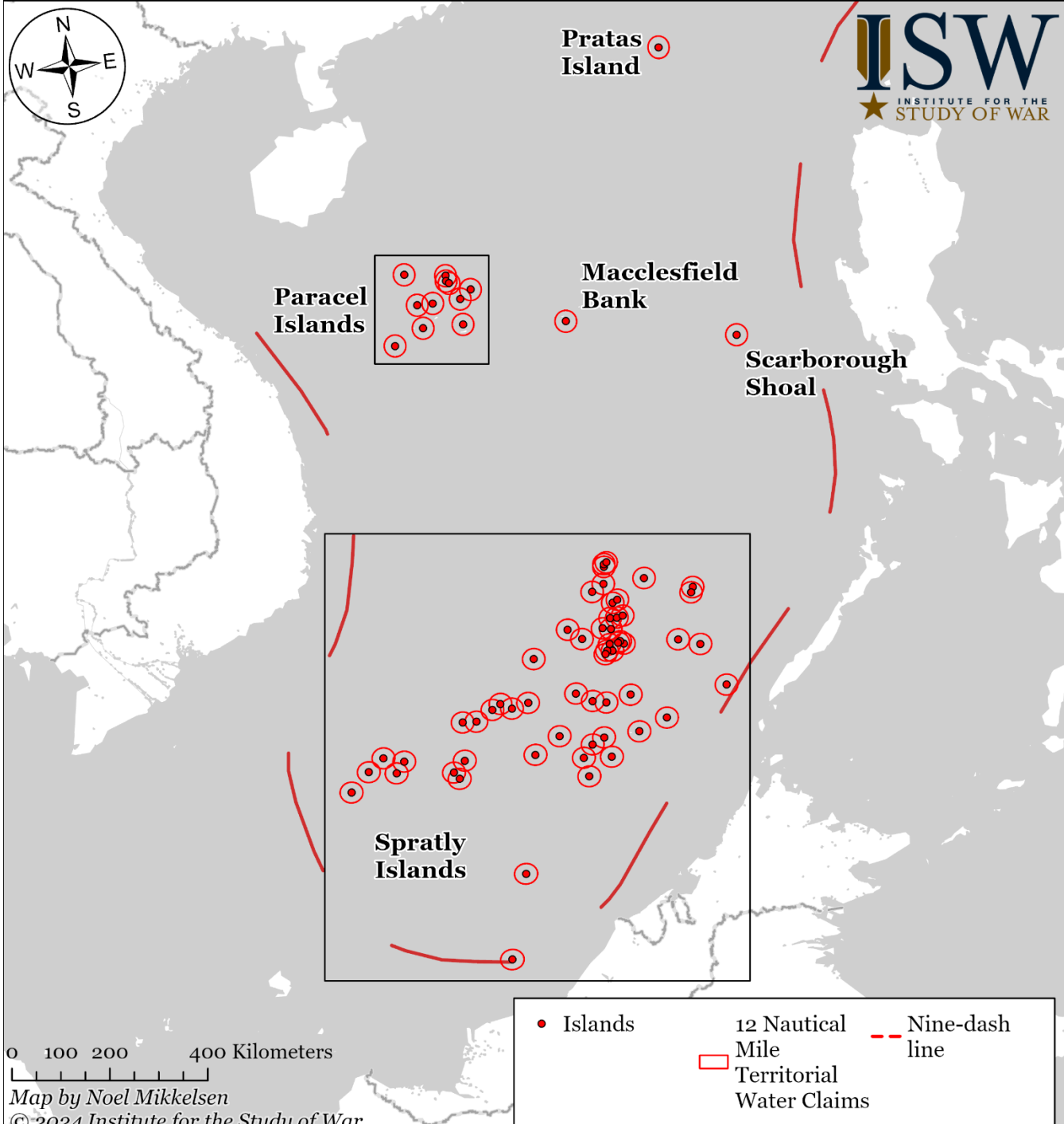
The Chinese Coast Guard (CCG) released new law enforcement procedures on May 15 likely as part of PRC efforts to assert territorial claims in the South China Sea. The CCG released the Coast Guard Administrative Law Enforcement Procedures (CGALEP), which states that the CCG can arrest and detain foreigners illegally entering or exiting PRC territorial boundaries for up to 30 days without trial. The CCG has the option to extend detentions up to 60 days in “complicated cases.”[81] The procedures will come into force on June 15.[82] The CCG announced the new procedures as the PRC is increasingly asserting its claims over disputed maritime features in the South China Sea, such as Scarborough and Second Thomas Shoal, amid heightened tensions with the Philippines. The PRC deployed research vessels and divers to the Sabina Shoal in May, potentially as part of a campaign to prevent the Philippines from defending its claim to the Second Thomas Shoal. This is a change from last month when the PRC deployed the Chinese Coast Guard to block Philippine ships from reaching Second Thomas Shoal and did not conduct efforts to reclaim Sabina Shoal.[83] The PRC also conducted its largest-ever blockade at Scarborough Shoal in May in an attempt to block a fleet of Philippine civilian ships from resupplying fishermen near Scarborough Shoal.[84]

The CCG could use the new law enforcement procedures to justify the arrest and detainment of non-PRC nationals and vessels, such as Philippine resupply ships or Filipino fishermen, within the boundaries of PRC territorial claims. The Philippine civilian group Atin Ito sent a convoy to resupply Filipino fishermen near Scarborough Shoal from May 14 to May 16. An advance party of the Atin Ito convoy delivered 1,000 liters of fuel and 200 food packs near Scarborough Shoal on May 16.[85] The convoy leaders declared the mission accomplished on May 16 in light of this news and decided not to sail closer to Scarborough Shoal.[86] The CCG also fired water cannons and collided with Philippine ships in March while attempting to block a Philippine resupply mission to Second Thomas Shoal.[87] These confrontations show the situations in the South China Sea under which the CCG could detain Philippine nationals under the CGALEP. Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. condemned the CGALEP and called it “completely unacceptable to the Philippines” and pledged “to always protect our citizens.”[88]

The map below depicts the PRC's claims of sovereignty over the South China Sea islands within the “nine-dash line” maritime boundary with the 12-nautical mile territory boundary depicted around each

of the maritime features that the PRC claims. The map does not depict contiguous zones, economic zones, and continental shelves that the PRC also claims because these do not constitute territorial waters.^[89] These island groups include the Spratly Islands (Nansha Islands), Paracel Islands (Xisha Islands), Pratas Island (Dongsha Islands), as well as Macclesfield Bank and Scarborough Shoal (Zhongsha Islands).^[90] In addition to territorial waters within 12 nautical miles of each maritime feature, the PRC claims straight baselines around the Paracel Islands as a group, which means it considers waters between these islands to be its internal waters even when they are more than 12 nautical miles from any individual island. The Permanent Court of Arbitration ruled in 2016 that there is no legal basis for the PRC's nine-dash line claims and that the PRC's actions had violated the Philippines' sovereign rights.^[91] The PRC rejected the ruling.^[92]

PRC Territorial Water Claims in the South China Sea



Europe

The PRC threatened to impose retaliatory tariff controls on European agricultural goods in response to EU subsidy investigations into PRC firms. This threat is part of a PRC campaign to dissuade the European leaders from implementing more hawkish economic policies that run counter to the PRC's interests. The China Chamber of Commerce to the EU stated on May 18 that it “was informed... if the EU continues its actions [subsidy investigations into PRC firms in the electronic vehicle, wind turbine, and security equipment sectors], the Chinese side will have no choice but to implement a series of retaliatory measures.” It also stated that “European wine and dairy products may find themselves caught in the crossfire.”^[93] The PRC wine and dairy imports are less than three percent of all of the PRC's imports from the EU.^[94] EU Agriculture Commissioner Janusz Wojciechowski's visit to the PRC in late April aimed to increase food exports to the PRC.^[95] The PRC threat of agricultural tariffs is one means to oppose this EU policy goal and coerce it into eliminating investigations into PRC companies at minimal cost to the PRC. The PRC is the EU's third largest export market for agricultural products, at six-point-four percent, however.^[96]

Russia

United Kingdom Defense Minister Grant Shapps stated on May 22 that US and UK intelligence have evidence that the PRC “is now or will be” providing lethal military assistance to Russia, a statement that US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan questioned.^[97] Shapps stated that this evidence is a “significant development” as the PRC has previously presented itself as a “moderating influence” but did not provide further information about the supposed intelligence. Sullivan stated during a press conference that he has previously warned that the PRC may supply Russia with lethal military assistance but that the US has “not seen that to date.”^[98] Sullivan stated that he will speak with his British counterparts to ensure that the US and UK have a “common operating picture” and to clarify Shapps' comment.

The PRC has provided non-lethal assistance to Russia to support its defense industrial base since at least 2023. Over 90 percent of Russian microelectronics imports came from the PRC in 2023, for example. These dual-use materials are key for manufacturing weapons.^[99] The CCP also provided Russia with military assistance such as rifles and smokeless powder at varying points in 2023.^[100] United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken stated in April and May 2024 that the PRC provided dual-use components, such as machine tools, to the PRC as part of “invaluable support to Russia's defense industrial base.”^[101]

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