



Consortium of Indo-Pacific

Researchers

Indo-Pacific Weekly Mail Feb.17-23, 2025

Greetings Colleagues,

The Consortium is pleased to share its latest newsletter for the Indo-Pacific. Press the reply button for your feedback and comments.

China Conducts Military Exercise in Talisman Sea



Figure 1: Chinese Navy Ship operating in the northeast of Australia

China has started a military drill in Tasman Sea near Australian coast this week. The three warships — frigate Hengyang, cruiser Zunyi and replenishment vessel Weishanhu — are exercising a freedom of navigation in international waters off the Australian east coast. The Chinese ship sent the live fire, worried Australia and New Zealand, also resulted in the diversion of several commercial flights, to avoid suspected live-fire exercises.

Both Australian and New Zealander leaders have showed their deep concern over the live fire and China's strategic penetration in the Tasman Sea. New Zealand Defence Minister Judith Collins has expressed concern regarding the recent presence of three Chinese naval ships positioned off the coast of Australia. She describes this development as a significant "wake-up call" for New Zealanders, highlighting the importance of being aware of global security dynamics. Collins emphasizes that New Zealanders should not take their sense of safety for granted simply because the country is geographically isolated from other nations. Instead, she urges citizens to recognize that potential threats can arise from any direction and that vigilance in national security is more crucial than ever. She added that "her nation must invest more in defense in response to China's power projection."

It is important to note that China held the military drill at the time when commander Adm. Samuel J. Paparo, of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, [visited Australia](#) to boost regional security cooperation and deepen U.S.-Australia

alliance. He participated in the defense and security discussion with his counterpart and officials. [Read More](#)

G-20 Foreign Ministers Meet in South Africa

The foreign ministers of G-20 countries met in Nasrec, Johannesburg, under the theme: "Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability". The President of South Africa, Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa, addressed the delegates and representatives, calling for international economic cooperation to forge inclusive growth that features sustainable development and the resilience of a multilayered system. The Leaders expressed deep concerns about conflicts in Africa, the Middle East, and Europe and reiterated to chart the path of peace in accordance with the Principles of the United Nations Charter. The group also underscored the need for reform in global governance institutions and to make the United Nations a reality fit and effective, including the reform in the Security Council. This is the first time the G-20 meeting has been held in Africa, and South Africa is leading it, seeking to enhance the country's economic and diplomatic stature.

It is important to mention that U.S. Secretary Marco Rubio did not attend the meeting, and as per reports, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent will also not be a part of next week's gathering of G20 finance ministers due to the [U.S.-South Africa diplomatic row](#). [Read More](#)

U.S. Exempts Foreign Aid for Taiwan and Philippines

Trump administration [exempted the foreign aid assistance](#) of over one billion dollars for Taiwan and Philippines security programs. As per reports, the exemption covers \$870 million for Taiwan and \$336 for the Philippines. The U.S. State department had frozen all the aids after President Trump signed an executive order as he assumed the office on January 20.

The continuation of aid would support deterrence against China's aggressive moves towards U.S. allies- Taiwan and Philippines. Notably, [media reports](#) that a Chinese Navy helicopter "came within 10 feet of a Philippine patrol plane" in the disputed Scarborough Shoal. The U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio criticized and condemned China's act of intimidation in the West China Sea. The U.S. reaffirmed its support for the Philippines under the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty, which includes a commitment to respond to armed attacks on Philippine armed forces, public vessels, or aircraft — including those operated by the Coast Guard — anywhere in the South China Sea. Furthermore, the U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio reaffirmed Washington's opposition to any unilateral changed to the status quo in the Taiwan Strait, emphasizing that the United States does not seek conflict and remains committed to its long-standing policies on Taiwan. [Read More](#)

Cook Island and China Announces Deal on Minerals

Cook Islands and China [signed a deal](#) with China to cooperate and communicate in exploring and researching seabed mineral riches. Both countries signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Blue Partnership in the Field of Seabed Minerals Affairs. They also agreed to form a joint committee of Marine Cooperation in Seabed Minerals Affairs for coordinating implementation of the MoU. The two countries also signed an agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation. [Read More](#)

Indo-Pacific Quiz

Where is Jewel Changi Airport?

- a. South Korea
- b. Australia
- c. Malaysia
- d. Japan

In which country is Phang Nga Bay located?

- a. Cambodia
 - b. China
 - c. South Korea
 - d. Thailand
-

Consortium Highlights

- ❖ Podcast: Leyte Island, [Listen Here](#)
-

Contributions: Indu Saxena
