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CHINA MILITARY DIGEST

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Air-standoffs between China and the Philippines in the South China Sea

Tian Junli, spokesman for the PLA Southern Theater Command, issued a statement on February 21, [accusing](#) two Philippine C-208 aircraft and one N-22 aircraft of "illegally intrude" the airspace of the "China Nansha Islands (南沙群岛)" (Spratly Islands) on February 20. The Spratly Islands, disputed territory in the South China Sea, [situated](#) around midway between Vietnam and the Philippines, and north of insular Malaysia, is claimed – wholly or in part – by several countries in the region. On February 20, a Chinese naval helicopter attempted to expel a C-208 Caravan series light patrol aircraft belonging to the Philippine Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR) from the airspace near Scarborough Shoal, and circled above the Philippine patrol aircraft in cloudy conditions and then approached it to its left, with the two aircraft less than three meters apart at the closest point. The mission was to assert the Philippines' sovereignty, sovereign rights, and maritime jurisdiction in the West Philippine Sea, the Philippine's official statement said. The "West Philippine Sea" is a northwest segment of the Spratly Islands falls within the Philippine's Exclusive Economic Zone, while China claims all of it. Mary Kay Carlson, the US ambassador to Manila, [rebuked](#) China on February 19 over its latest actions. "We condemn the dangerous maneuvers by a PLA Navy helicopter that endangered pilots and passengers on a Philippine air mission. We call on China to refrain from coercive actions and settle its disputes peacefully in accordance with international law," she wrote. Also, on February 19, the US State Department spokeswoman Tammy Bruce condemned "unsafe and irresponsible actions by the PLA Navy to interfere with a Philippine maritime air operation in the vicinity of Scarborough Reef".

Xi Jinping signed an order to release the newly revised "PLA Common Regulations"

On February 21, Xi Jinping [signed](#) an order to release the newly revised "*People's Liberation Army Internal Affairs Regulations*", "*People's Liberation Army Discipline Regulations*", and "*People's Liberation Army Formation Regulations*" (collectively referred as 'common regulations'), with effect from April 1, 2025. The 'Common Regulations' are the basic laws and regulations for military construction, basis for regular management, and the basic norms for officers and soldiers' behavior. Colonel Wu Qian, spokesman of the Ministry of National Defense [said](#), the newly revised 'Common Regulations' are guided by Xi Jinping's Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, deeply implement Xi Jinping's Thought on Strengthening the Army, implement the military strategic policy of the new era, focus on preparing for war, respond to the concerns of the troops, systematically summarize the new experience of troop construction and management, and make comprehensive regulations on the regularization of the army. The revised "*Regulations on Internal Affairs of the PLA*" has 13 chapters and 311 articles, mainly improving the basic norms of military oaths, military duties, internal and external relations, military appearance and discipline, etiquette, etc.; optimizing daily systems such as duty, internal affairs settings, and staying in the camp; enriching measures such as normal combat readiness, military training management, intelligent electronic equipment management, and overseas task force management. The revised "*Regulations on Discipline of the PLA*" consists of 8 chapters and 193 articles, mainly distinguishing between wartime, peacetime and major non-war military operations, improving the system of commendation for military merits and

honors; optimizing military discipline disciplinary items, enriching and refining disciplinary conditions, and standardizing specific circumstances of tolerance and exemption, and relevant procedures for reporting, accusing and appealing. The revised "*Regulations on Formation of the PLA*" consists of 8 chapters and 100 articles, mainly adding basic norms for enriching the implementation norms of land parades, sea parades, dock parades and air parades; enriching and expanding the types of ceremonies.

Chinese defence industry executive Liu Weidong under investigation for alleged corruption

On February 12, 2025, the website of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) and the National Supervisory Commission [announced](#) that Liu Weidong, member of the Party Leadership Group and Deputy General Manager of China Ordnance Equipment Group Co., Ltd. (CSGC), was under investigation on suspicion of “serious violations of the Party discipline and the law” – which is usually a reference to corruption. China Ordnance Equipment Group Corporation is a leading producer of armaments for the People’s Liberation Army (PLA). Liu Weidong, [born](#) in 1966, was a senior engineer at the research fellow level for a long-time, and before being appointed CSGC Deputy General Manager in 2018. The commission did not reveal specific allegations against Liu. A slew of executives from other state-owned defence firms – companies that manufacture weapons for the PLA and clients overseas – are also under investigation. It has caused heads to roll in almost all major defence enterprises, including fighter manufacturers, missile producers and warship makers. In 2024, the official account of the Discipline Inspection Commission of Dongfeng Motor

Corporation, announced 46 cases of disciplinary review and supervision investigation due to violations of discipline and law, including the Dongfeng Peugeot-Citroen Automobile. It indicates that his involvement in corruption is of during his tenure at Dongfeng Company. Including Liu Weidong, the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection and the National Supervisory Commission have publicly reported the review and investigation of 4 central management cadres this year.

The Philippines and the United States hold joint exercises in the South China Sea

The air forces of the Philippines and the United States [held](#) one-day "South China Sea joint cruise" on February 4, a move that angered China, which also conducted a two-day "routine patrol" over a disputed Scarborough Shoal (China calls it *Huangyan Island/黄岩岛*). The United States sent two B-1B strategic bombers, and the Philippines sent two FA-50 fighter trainers, to fly over Scarborough Shoal. Manila and Beijing have frequently [clashed](#) in the South China Sea in recent years, and tensions have continued to escalate. PLA Southern Theater Command Air Force dispatched J-16 and Su-30 heavy fighters to respond to the operation. The Su-30 fighter was equipped with PL-8 and PL-12 air-to-air missiles, and the J-16 carried YJ-91 anti-radiation missiles. The Philippines and the United States have [ramped](#) up security arrangements under President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Romualdez Marcos Jr. against a backdrop of rising tension between Manila and Beijing stemming from overlapping claims in the busy waterway. On February 4, Maria Consuelo Castillo, a spokeswoman for the Philippine Air Force, [announced](#) "The exercise aims to enhance operational coordination, improve airspace awareness, and strengthen agile operational employment between the two air forces." Li Jianjian, spokesman for the PLA Southern

Theater Command Air Force stated on February 4, accusing the Philippines of "cooperating with countries outside the region to organize so-called joint cruises" and calling the move "deliberately undermining" peace and stability in the South China Sea.

Chinese Navy live-fire drills in the Pacific raises concerns in Canberra and Wellington

On 21 February, the Chinese task group [conducted](#) two live-fire exercises in the Tasman Sea, between Australia's most populous region and New Zealand. Three Chinese warships were Type-055 missile destroyer *Zunyi*, Type-054A missile frigate *Hengyang* and ocean-going comprehensive supply ship *Weishanhu*. The warships [were](#) at about 150 nautical miles (about 278 kilometers) east of Sydney. The drills prompted 49 flight [diversions](#) on February 21, with aircraft continuing to avoid the area over the weekend. Australia and New Zealand both deployed military assets, including P-8A maritime patrol planes, to monitor the Chinese warships as they carried out exercises in the Tasman Sea some 650km southeast of Sydney on February 21. On February 22, Australian Defence Minister Richard Marles [criticised](#) Beijing for not giving adequate notice of the drills in the waters between Australia and New Zealand, calling the late alert "disconcerting" for commercial aviation. Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong said she discussed the issue with China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi on the sidelines of a G20 meeting in South Africa on February 21. New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Laxon [said](#) on February 24 that Wellington will raise the issue of the Chinese Navy's live-fire exercises without sufficient advance notice with Beijing. Laxon said China abides by international law and there is no legal problem, but Wellington hopes to get more advance notice, "especially on such a busy route." Beijing has dismissed

Canberra's accusations as "baseless and misleading" on February 23.

China participates in the 9th Multinational Maritime Exercise 'AMAN-2025' in Karachi

The 9th edition of AMAN series of multinational maritime exercises, 'AMAN 2025', which is [held](#) every two years, kicks off at Pakistan Navy Dockyard (PN Dockyard) in Karachi on February 7, 2025. The Chinese [participating](#) naval forces include the *Baotou* ship (包头船)-a missile destroyer, the *Gaoyouhu* ship (高邮湖舰)-a comprehensive supply ship, a ship-borne helicopter, and dozens of marines. The "AMAN-2025" multinational maritime joint exercise is divided into two phases: February 7 to 9 is the port phase, which mainly conducts exercise consultations, roundtable discussions, ship visits and other activities; February 10 to 11 is the maritime phase, which will hold maritime exercises and international fleet reviews. On February 8, during the "AMAN-2025" joint exercise, Admiral Naveed Ashraf, Chief of Staff of the Pakistan Navy, boarded the Chinese naval ship *Gaoyouhu* docked at the Karachi Port. During the port and shore [activities](#), the Chinese naval fleet conducted exercise consultations, ship visits and other activities with the maritime forces of the participating countries. On February 10, in a sea area in Karachi, Pakistan, a fleet [consisting](#) of ships from more than 10 participating countries including China, Pakistan, the United States, and Indonesia sailed towards the exercise area in a pearl formation. During the joint exercise, Chinese Navy *Baotou* ship conducted main gun sea shooting coordination exercises with the participating countries. Chinese officers Lin Xin (林鑫) and Han Yingqiu (韩英秋) were operating the ship-based guns during the live-fire exercise. This joint exercise is the ninth time that China has participated in this series of joint exercises.