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Taiwan

Taiwan warns Chinese military exercises 'simulating an attack'

Beijing hails success in deterring US intervention as unprecedented drills set to wrap up



China's military manoeuvres have been unprecedented in scale and proximity to Taiwan, and have for the first time included operations that would be involved in an attempted invasion of the country © Lin Jian/Xinhua/AP

Kathrin Hille in Taipei 5 HOURS AGO

Chinese fighter aircraft and warships continued to simulate an assault on Sunday morning as Beijing said it had met its objective of intimidating “independence forces” and deterring US intervention ahead of the planned conclusion of its largest-ever military exercises around the island.

“This morning, we continued to detect multiple waves of Chinese military aircraft, naval ships and drones operating in the Taiwan Strait area and conducting joint sea and air drills, simulating an attack on Taiwan proper and strikes on our naval vessels,” Taiwan’s defence ministry said.

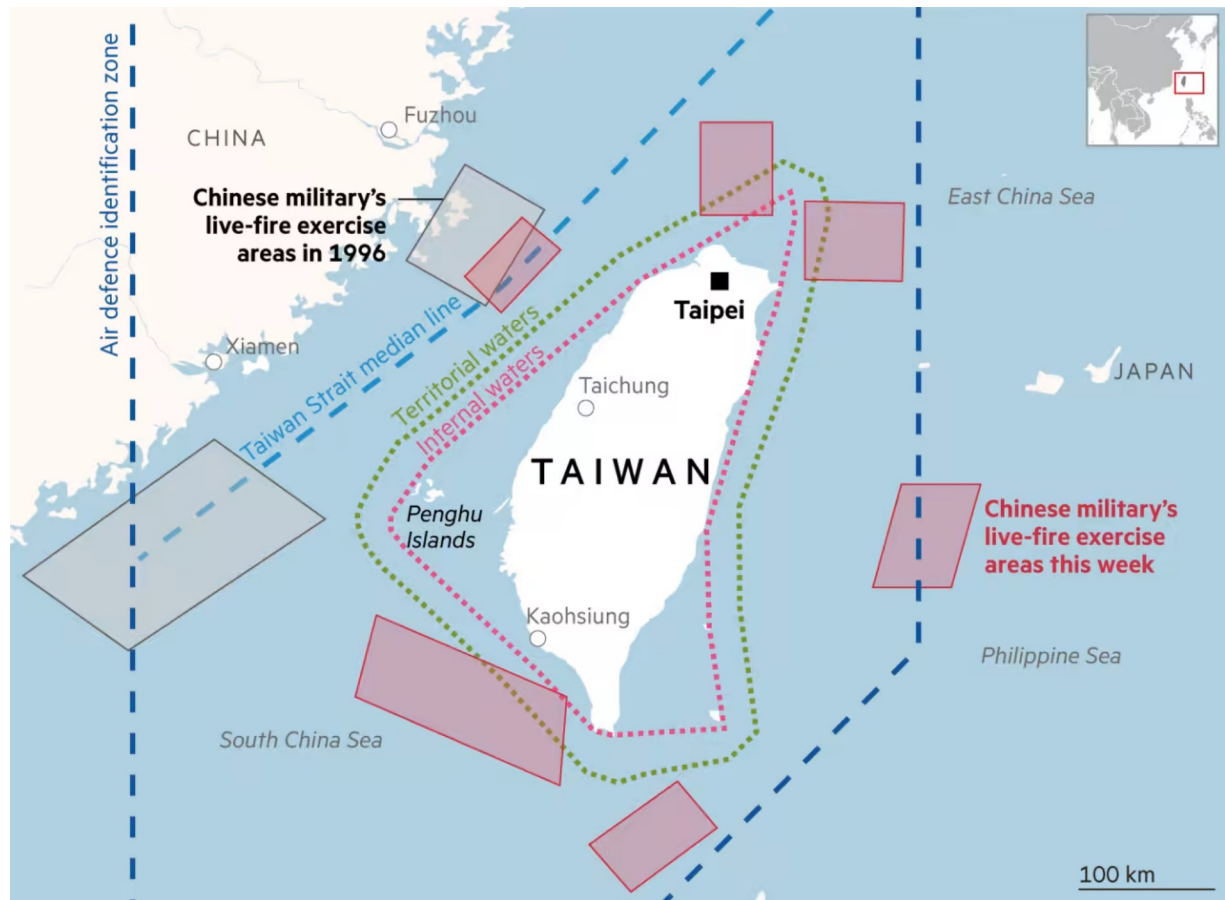
The drills, which Beijing has characterised as a punishment for US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s visit to Taipei, have [dramatically escalated tensions](#) in the Taiwan Strait and between China and the US.

The four-day manoeuvres have been unprecedented in scale and proximity to [Taiwan](#), and have also included the People’s Liberation Army for the first time practising operations that would be involved in an attempted invasion in the actual airspace and waters where such an attack would begin.

At 12.30pm, half an hour after all but one of China’s navigation warnings for the drills expired, the PLA’s Eastern Theatre Command said it was “continuing joint exercises

as planned. The navigation warning for the last area closed for the manoeuvres, in airspace and waters east of Taiwan, is due to expire at 2am on Monday.

Taiwanese defence officials said the country's navy was patrolling its side of the Taiwan Strait median line, an unofficial buffer that China respected in the past but has repeatedly intruded on during the drills. The officials added that PLA ships had not stepped up provocations or attempted more dangerous manoeuvres on Sunday.



On Saturday, 14 PLA aircraft flew across the median line, according to the Taiwanese defence ministry, following 30 on Friday and 12 on Thursday.

In another first, the PLA's Rocket Force [fired missiles that traversed the skies](#) over Taiwan on Thursday, five of which landed in Japan's exclusive economic zone.

The manoeuvres had "created the conditions for the early realisation of national unification and built a favourable strategic posture", said Meng Xiangqing, a professor at China's National Defence University, on state television on Sunday. He added there had been several "breakthroughs", including deterring "Taiwan independence forces". The PLA had also "completely obliterated the Taiwan Strait median line".

Air and sea traffic to and from Taiwan, which had been diverted by China's live-fire drills, started to return to normal on Sunday afternoon, allaying fears about the [impact on global supply chains](#) of extended transport disruption.

The country's civil aviation and port authorities said flights and ships could gradually resume regular operations, with Taipei continuing to divert traffic only around the seventh of the exercise areas, off eastern Taiwan, until 10am on Monday.

Flight tracking site Flightradar24 showed flights between Taiwan's main international airport and Japan had resumed direct routes as usual, after flying wide detours for more than three days.

China has accompanied its air, naval, missile, long-range artillery and cyber operations with muscular [propaganda and information warfare](#).

Over the weekend, the PLA and state media published photos and videos of Taiwan's coastline and central mountain range seen from the cockpit of a Chinese fighter jet, with commentary from a pilot who expressed pride at having come close to "the motherland's treasure island".

The Eastern Theatre Command also disseminated footage of Taiwan's east coast. Taipei has traditionally viewed the region as a safe retreat for its air and naval assets in case of a Chinese assault, but it has been highlighted as a vulnerable flank by the missile tests and a dramatic increase in Chinese naval activity in recent months.

"Sailing in these waters . . . we feel a heavy responsibility and a glorious mission," Li Ning, political commissar on a Chinese frigate, said in a video broadcast by state-run CCTV which showed the chimney of Hoping power plant on Taiwan's east coast, a critical pillar of the country's power supply. "One word, and we will take on the heavy burden without regard for our lives," Li Ning added.

Nicholas Burns, the US ambassador to China, warned that China's actions threatened the decades-long status quo in the Taiwan Strait.

"As [secretary of state Antony Blinken] said, 'There is no justification for this extreme, disproportionate and escalatory military response.' The world should hold Beijing accountable to maintain the peace," Burns wrote on Twitter. The statement followed a string of appeals for calm, including from the G7.

Taiwan started pushing back more forcefully at the weekend. It said on Sunday that units operating its domestically developed Hsiung Feng II anti-ship missiles had been put on high alert and were monitoring Chinese warships. It added that it was sharing

information on the PLA's movements detected by its Leshan early warning radar station, one of the world's largest, with friendly governments.

Taiwanese diplomats in the US, Japan and Europe explained the country's position in media interviews over the weekend and appealed for international support.

"This is another battlefield between Taiwan and China," said Wang Ting-yu, a lawmaker of the ruling Democratic Progressive party, referring to duelling narratives over China's military moves. With its military posturing, China had transformed itself into an "international troublemaker".

"There is no benefit for China in this," he added.

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