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# CHINA MILITARY DIGEST

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- China's CMC members are under Investigations
- PLA conducts "Justice Mission-2025" Exercise around Taiwan
- PLA Southern Theatre Command Patrols in the South China Sea
- China-led "Peace Will-2026" Maritime Joint Exercise was held
- China sends Peacekeeping Missions to South Sudan

## China's CMC members are under Investigations

China's Ministry of National Defense (MND) announced on January 24, two senior PLA Generals Zhang Youxia (张又侠, 1950), a member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and vice chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC), and Liu Zhenli (刘振立, 1964), another CMC member and Chief of the CMC Joint Staff Department, were [placed](#) under investigation. The investigation was launched after the deliberation at the meeting of the CPC Central Committee, the Ministry confirmed. General Zhang Youxia, 75 years of age, [was](#) the second-ranking figure in the Chinese military after Xi Jinping. His decades-long personal relationship with Xi Jinping enabled his rapid promotion in the Chinese military and ultimately made him one of the most trusted figures for Xi Jinping in controlling the military. In fact, Zhang Youxia and Xi Jinping are second-generation of family friends, their father Zhang Zongxun (张宗逊, 1908) and Xi Zhongxun (习仲勋, 1913) are PLA veterans and fought together the Chinese Civil War (1945-1949) in Northwest China. Nonetheless, Zhang Youxia was the only serving officer in the Chinese military with war experiences, who have participated in 1979 Sino-Vietnam War and 1984 Sino-Vietnam Border Conflict. The other officer being investigated along with Zhang Youxia is General Liu Zhenli, who was leading the "command center" of the PLA's operational system. It is worth mentioning that within a span of two years, five out of seven members of the Central Military

Commission (CMC) were ousted with only two remaining namely, Xi Jinping, the CMC Chairman, and Zhang Shengmin (张升民, 1958), who is Director of the CMC Discipline Inspection Commission and vice chairman of the CMC. In support of the decisions of the Chinese Ministry of National Defense, the PLA Daily writes that resolutely [investigating](#) corrupt elements such as Zhang Youxia and Liu Zhenli removes obstacles affecting the development of a strong military. The article notes, the more the military fights corruption, the stronger, purer, and more combat-ready it becomes.

## PLA conducts "Justice Mission-2025" Exercise around Taiwan

Reported in early January, 2026, the PLA Eastern Theatre Command [conducted](#) a large-scale exercise themed "Justice Mission (正义使命)-2025" in the air and waters around Taiwan on December 29-30, 2025. This was the second major maritime exercise by China around Taiwan after the "Strait Thunder (海峡雷霆)-2025A" exercise held in April last year. The key subjects of the drills [include](#) 'sea and air combat patrols', 'seizing comprehensive superiority', 'blocking key ports and territory', and 'three-dimensional external line deterrence'. Besides, live-fire long-range artillery drills were conducted in relevant sea areas north and south of Taiwan. For the exercise, the Theatre Command mobilized destroyers, frigates, and fighter-bombers. Destroyers and frigates conducted exercise in subjects such as anti-ship attack, air defense, and anti-submarine warfare. The H-6K bombers were used for long-range simulated strikes

on multiple targets. The Theatre Command sent multiple batches of fighter jets to conduct exercises with naval vessels formations aimed at testing the capabilities of sea-air coordination and integrated blockade. On the first day of the exercise, a total of 130 sorties of PLA fighter jets participated in a tactical air activity, and of these, 90 sorties crossed the Taiwan Strait centerline. On the second day, a total of 71 sorties of fighter aircrafts participated in the drills, of these 35 sorties crossed the Taiwan Strait centerline. Besides, 32 PLA Navy warships were deployed for the drills. Furthermore, about 10 long-range rockets were fired from locations in Pingtan (平潭) and Shishi (石獅) in Fujian Province of China that struck the designated targets near Taiwan. The commander of an unidentified brigade of the Theatre Command said that this live-fire drill was an effective test of the troops' capabilities in blockading islands and disrupting supply lines.

### **PLA Southern Theater Command Patrols in the South China Sea**

The PLA Southern Theatre Command [conducted](#) a combat readiness patrol on January 31 in the territorial waters and airspace of Huangyan Dao, widely known as Scarborough Shoal, in the South China Sea. It is a major flashpoint for territorial disputes and maritime jurisdiction between China and the Philippines. During the drills, the PLA used H-6K bomber armed with YJ-12 anti-ship missiles and the Type 055 destroyer 'Xianyang'. Besides, other PLA aircrafts and ships also participated in the drills. These exercises are [conducted](#) in response to the activities of the other navies in the region, the official statement from the

Chinese side said. In fact, the public information shows that the Philippines recently designated a military exercise zone that included Huangyan Dao for their large-scale maritime exercise scheduled from January 21 to March 31, 2026. On this, the Chinese Ministry of National Defense issued a statement on January 29 that said, Huangyan Dao is China's inherent territory, and the Philippines side is attempting to carry out infringement and provocation. "We are strongly dissatisfied with and firmly oppose it, and have lodged solemn representations with the Philippines side. China will firmly safeguard its territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests in accordance with the law, and maintain peace and stability in the South China Sea," the spokesperson said.

### **China-led "Peace Will-2026" Maritime Joint Exercise was held**

A maritime joint exercise themed "Peace Will-2026" was [held](#) at Simon's Town Port in Cape Town, South Africa on January 9 – 16, 2026, with China, Russia, South Africa, and other BRICS member states participating. The joint exercise aimed at improving "joint actions to maintain the security of important shipping lanes and economic activities." The South African Department of Defense [confirmed](#) that the joint exercise will be held in South African waters led by China, featuring maritime safety operations, interoperability drills, and counter-terrorism rescue, and maritime strike training. "The 'Peace Will 2026' exercise [brings](#) together navies from BRICS+ countries to carry out maritime security operations and interoperability drills," the statement added. This joint exercise is part of the "BRICS+" initiative

for “ensuring the safety of shipping and maritime economic activities,” the official statement noted. The “BRICS+” has added new member countries including Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). At the opening ceremony on January 10, a Chinese officer presiding the ceremony confirmed that Brazil, Egypt, and Ethiopia are participating in the joint exercise as observers. For the joint exercise, China sent guided-missile destroyer ‘Tangshan’ and the comprehensive supply ship ‘Taihu (太湖舰)’, carrying one shipborne helicopter and dozens of special force personnel. The joint exercise was divided into two phases, the first one was port phase, from January 9 to 12, included opening ceremony, ship visits, cultural and sports activities, and professional technical exchanges. The second was sea phase, from January 13 to 15, involved joint exercises by the participating navies on subjects such as communication drills, formation maneuvers, anti-surface warfare, rescuing hijacked vessels, and rescue of injured personnel by helicopter. The closing ceremony was held on January 16.

### **China sends Peacekeeping Missions to South Sudan**

China has sent its peacekeeper to [participate](#) in the ongoing UN-led peacekeeping operations to South Sudan, which is facing humanitarian crisis. In January various activities of the Chinese peacekeeping teams were reported officially. For instance, in early January, China’s 16<sup>th</sup> peacekeeping engineering contingent to the city of Wau in South Sudan, which passed the UN’s equipment inspection. Besides, the 12<sup>th</sup> Chinese

Peacekeeping Infantry Battalion to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) [completed](#) a five-day United Nation induction training for the next phase of its peacekeeping operations. The induction training was significant that included 30 courses on themes such as introduction to South Sudan, regional security situations, medical evacuation procedures, military-civilian coordination, and rules of engagement. The lectures were delivered by officials from operational and training units of UNMISS. Since mid-December 2025, the 12<sup>th</sup> Chinese Peacekeeping Infantry Battalion to South Sudan (Juba) has carried out authorized missions such as security duty, patrolling and escort, and humanitarian relief task. Furthermore, another batch of the Chinese peacekeeper, the 16<sup>th</sup> Chinese Peacekeeping Force to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) [completed](#) a three-day UN induction training. The training covered themes such as security situation in the mission area, protection of civilians, and health education. It was reported that the Chinese Peacekeeping Engineering Contingent was allotted the tasks of construction of the main supply lines and camp infrastructure, while the Chinese Medical Contingent were to conduct emergency medical treatment and evacuation of wounded. Later on, the 16<sup>th</sup> Chinese Peacekeeping Horizontal Engineering Company to the UNMISS were [carrying](#) out repair work of the 150 kms-long main supply route from Kuajok to Turalei and Abiemnhom. The supply route is the key line for material support and humanitarian assistance of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan.