



## China Conducts Naval Exercises and Ballistic Missile Tests in South China Sea

A July 1 AP report cited a notice from China's Maritime Safety Administration that the communist giant is holding military exercises across a large portion of the South China Sea, reinforcing its claims over the entire strategic body of water. The exercises will end on July 3.



The report noted that China “considers control of the South China Sea as crucial to its foreign trade routes and aspirations to surpass the U.S. as the dominant military power in the Asia-Pacific region.”

Another report from CNBC cited statements from two U.S. officials who said that the Chinese carried out the first of a series of anti-ship ballistic missile tests in the South China Sea over the weekend, firing off at least one missile into the sea. The window for testing remains open until July 3.

The report noted that a U.S. official said that U.S. military has ships in the South China Sea, but they were not close to the weekend test and were not in danger. However, the official added that the test is “concerning.” The official, who was not authorized to speak about the testing, could not say whether the anti-ship missiles being tested represent a new capability for the Chinese military.

The CNBC report stated that the South China Sea, “which is home to more than 200 specks of land, serves as a gateway to global sea routes where approximately \$3.4 trillion of trade passes annually.” It continued:

The numerous overlapping sovereign claims to islands, reefs and rocks — many of which disappear under high tide — have turned the waters into an armed camp. Beijing holds the lion's share of these features with approximately 27 outposts peppered throughout.

*The New American* has published multiple articles about China's attempts to dominate the South China Sea and the competing claims and disputes between several nations over islands within that sea. One such article in 2018 cited a UPI report that the USS *Theodore Roosevelt*, leading a carrier strike group, was sailing within the “nine-dash line” that extends more than 1,200 miles from the Chinese mainland into the South China Sea. Beijing claims the waters bounded by that line as its own, while the United States and other nations maintain that the area is in international waters.

That article cited a Reuters report noting that the United States has criticized China's apparent militarization of manmade islands in the South China Sea and that the U.S. military has carried out regular air and naval patrols to assert its right to freedom of navigation in portions of the sea that China claims as its own.

*The New American* report noted that the area of the South China Sea where the Chinese navy was undergoing maneuvers at the time was within the “nine-dash line” originally established by the Republic of China before the communist takeover of mainland China. The “nine-dash line” is used by



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both rival Chinese governments to substantiate the claims over a major part of the South China Sea.

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