



Japan Conducts Submarine Drill Near Chinese-occupied Islands

The Japanese submarine *Kuroshio* on September 13 joined three Japanese warships in conducting a drill in waters just southwest of the China-controlled Scarborough Shoal, Japan's daily newspaper *Asahi Shimbun* reported.

Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force conducted a "practical" anti-submarine drill, including an exercise to spot enemy submarines with sonar devices, *Asahi* reported, quoting unnamed Japanese government sources.



The sources said it was a legitimate naval exercise in neutral waters, with rights of access secured under international law.

As we write, China has made no official comment on the Japanese naval exercise, as it did on September 6 after a British Royal Navy warship, the *HMS Albion*, sailed close to the Paracel Islands in late August. The Chinese asserted that Britain was engaging in "provocation" and that it had lodged a strong complaint.

The Paracels are occupied entirely by China but claimed by Vietnam and Taiwan.

A Reuters report cited two unnamed sources, one of which said Beijing dispatched a frigate and two helicopters to challenge the British ship, but both sides remained calm during the encounter.

The other source said that the *Albion* did not enter the territorial seas around any features in the disputed region but also noted that Britain does not recognize China's "excessive" maritime claims around the Paracel Islands.

China's Foreign Ministry, in a faxed statement sent to Reuters, said the ship had entered Chinese territorial waters around the Paracel Islands on August 31 without permission, and the Chinese navy had warned them to leave.

Back in 2015, *The Global Times*, owned by the Chinese Communist Party's *People's Daily*, said in an editorial that "U.S.-China war is inevitable in the South China Sea ... if the United States' bottom line is that China has to halt its activities" in the disputed Spratly Islands.

Last April, we reported that as a Chinese carrier group was set to engage in naval drills near Hainan — a Chinese province consisting of several islands in the South China Sea — the *USS Theodore Roosevelt* led a carrier strike group into that sea, conducting what the U.S. military called a routine training mission. Though there was no physical interaction between the naval groups, China's verbal condemnation ensued.

Reuters reported that the United States is not alone in carrying out naval patrols in the strategic waterway, where Chinese, Japanese, and some Southeast Asian navies operate.



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on September 18, 2018

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