
China Briefs

U.S.-Chinese Naval Formations Face to Face in the Philippine Sea

Large formations of both Chinese and American naval warships have been conducting drills separately at the same time in the Philippine Sea. The Chinese aircraft carrier *Liaoning* has led a battle group into the western Pacific Ocean for “open-sea combat training,” said Sr. Capt. Gao Xiucheng, a spokesperson for the People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), on May 3. The spokesperson said that it was a routine training exercise within the annual work plan of the PLAN and designed to improve the aircraft carrier battle group’s ability to fulfill its missions

At the same time, the USS *Abraham Lincoln*, a Nimitz-class carrier—much larger than *Liaoning*—and its accompanying battle group, which arrived in the western Pacific last month, was taking part in drills in the Sea of Japan together with Japanese warships. The deployment of the *Abraham Lincoln* is a further ratcheting up of the U.S. presences in the region, increasing the tensions with China over Taiwan. On April 27, British Foreign Minister Liz Truss had made comments that NATO should also be prepared to protect Taiwan, which received a sharp rebuke from the Chinese Foreign Ministry.

Ukraine Asks China To Mediate in Conflict with Russia

Speaking to Xinhua on April 30, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said, “We propose that China

become one of the guarantors of Ukraine’s security.” “This is a sign of our respect and trust in the People’s Republic of China,” he added.

Kuleba claimed that Russia had “compromised” China’s Belt and Road Initiative: “Every country, including China, wants global stability. After all, the links between international trade and people can only be better developed when they are stable. Stability is the guarantee for the successful implementation of global projects, such as the Belt and Road Initiative proposed by Chinese leaders. Russia has undermined this initiative.”

Kuleba thanked China “for its position of avoiding escalating the situation.” “We hope that China will start from the position that it must avoid escalation of the situation and call on Russia to cease fire,” Kuleba said.

Referring to the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence of Premier Zhou Enlai, Kuleba said, “It is a responsible position that China does not seek geopolitical goals and not add fuel to Russia’s war against Ukraine.”

In April, the Chinese Foreign Ministry was asked about its suggestion in 2013 of presenting security guarantees to Ukraine. The Ministry responded that “security assurances have clear limitations ... and are triggered under specific conditions.” China has blamed NATO for setting the stage for the military operation in Ukraine, and for extending it.

Xinhua also carried a lengthy interview with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on April 30, in which Lavrov extensively explained Russia’s position on the matter. The back-to-back interviews may indicate a step in the direction of China playing a more active role in mediating the conflict.

China: Europe’s Failed Bloc Policy Not Needed in Asia

China’s *Global Times*’ lead editorial on May 7 expressed the outrage in China at the new military cooperation between Japan and the UK, following the May 5 signing of a Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA) between Prime Ministers Boris Johnson and Fumio Kishida in London. They write: “NATO, which created division in Europe and waged wars around the world, is trying to apply the tricks of ‘bloc politics’ and ‘confrontation between camps’ to the Asia-Pacific region. For a long time, the UK has propagated on several occasions ‘the globalization of NATO’ and the ‘need to preempt threats in the Indo-Pacific’ and to ensure the island of Taiwan ‘is able to defend itself.’ It seems Tokyo wants to be the ‘traitorous guide’ for NATO’s expansion in the Asia-Pacific region.”

The editorial warns that Japan is planning to dump its pacifist constitution and “resurrect its militarism.” Noting that Kishida visited Indonesia, Vietnam and Thailand before traveling to Europe, the editorial says his efforts to get these ASEAN nations to join in bashing Russia and China did not succeed: “Asian countries that received Japanese officials have kept vigilant toward Tokyo’s remarks and been reluctant to echo Japan. Not until in the UK, which wants to recover its glory, has Kishida felt some ‘warmth of a friend.’ This will easily make people recall the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in the 20th century.”

Asia has remained peaceful in recent decades, the editors add, be-

cause Asian nations “have been seeking common ground while putting aside differences. With vision beyond ideological and geopolitical divergence, Asian countries have engaged in pragmatic cooperation in the globalization era. These made Asia the most vital and dynamic region in the world and made ‘Asian century’ a lasting discussion topic in the international strategic sphere.” It is now clear that the Western security model has failed, they go on, and bringing that failed model to Asia has the “intent to undermine regional peace and stability.... Asian countries must remain on high alert. History over and over again showed that a country’s security cannot be based on other countries’ insecurity.... The NATO military bloc is poison, not an antidote, to the security anxieties and tensions in the region.... Vigilance against and rejection of the ‘NATO expansion into Asia-Pacific’ should become the strong consensus and collective consciousness of all countries in the region.”

Liz Truss Calls for NATO Expansion into the Pacific

It seems the British Foreign Minister is dreaming of a revival of the British Empire on the back of U.S. attempts to expand a military alliance to the Asia-Pacific region. After consultations between the U.S. and Great Britain in early March on the situation in the region, where Britain had for so long maintained its final foothold of Empire in Hong Kong—transferred back to China only in 1997—Truss felt confident in making the outrageous statement that NATO should have the capability of protecting Taiwan! In comments at the Lord Mayor’s Easter Banquet on April 27, according to the *Financial Times*, Truss said, “NATO must have a global outlook,” and “needs to preempt threats in the Indo-Pacific.” More pointedly,

she said that it “must ensure that democracies like Taiwan are able to defend themselves.”

She made these comments as NATO was engaged in a major discussion on how much emphasis should be given to the “security threat” posed by China. Many European nations are not keen on including China in the NATO area of operations. Many of them have greatly benefited by China’s Belt and Road Initiative, which is characterized by the U.S. and the British Empire as an “economic threat.” While Great Britain has abandoned the EU, it is serving as a stalking horse for the U.S., to tamp down opposition to its policy, which has abandoned the traditions of Washington, Lincoln and FDR in favor of a more Churchillian approach. Germany, the largest economy in Europe, but still suffering the effects of being a post-World War II occupied country, has abandoned its opposition to a military build-up against Russia in Ukraine. And France’s President Macron is flailing somewhere between Paradise and Gehenna, not sure of his destination. The Brits, buoyed by the U.S. stance and tired of simply being a nation (of sorts), have seen their opportunity to again raise the Imperial flag.

China Sets Up World’s Highest Automated Weather Station

China has placed an automated weather station atop Mount Qomolangma, or Mount Everest as it is known in the West. The work was accomplished by the Institute of Tibetan Plateau Research under the Chinese Academy of Sciences with the aid of some very experienced Tibetan mountain climbers. In addition to the weather station, eight elevation gradient meteorological stations have been set up on Qomolangma above

8,000 meters (27,000 feet).

Much of the results will involve monitoring pollutants, and changes in the Rongbuk glacier and the ice lake. They will study changes in the glacier in order to clarify the impact of any “global warming.”

There will also be studies on the researchers themselves, to explore the impact of an ultra-high altitude environment on human health.

This expedition is the largest since surveys of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau began in 2017.

Chinese Scientists Propose Autonomous Production of Oxygen and Fuels on Moon

Scientists at Nanjing University propose a system for energy production and for generating oxygen for breathing on the Moon that relies solely on lunar resources. In their [report](#) in *Joule* May 5, “Extraterrestrial Photosynthesis by Chang’e-5 Lunar Soil,” Yingfang Yao, Lu Wang, and many coauthors propose the electrolysis of water found in the lunar soil, breaking it down into hydrogen and oxygen. And the carbon dioxide exhaled by inhabitants can be collected and combined with the hydrogen to form hydrocarbons including fuels methane and methanol. These processes can be powered by sunlight and catalyzed by compounds they have found in soil samples brought back from the Moon by Chang’e-5, in particular iron-rich and titanium-rich substances. Yingfang Yao [states](#), “We use in-situ environmental resources to minimize rocket payload, and our strategy provides a scenario for a sustainable and affordable extraterrestrial living environment.”

According to Earth.com on May 5, “The team is now looking for an opportunity to test the system in space, likely with China’s future crewed lunar missions.”