

3. Military Drill Around Taiwan – Internal Security

Recently, China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) conducted a large-scale military exercise around Taiwan named 'Justice Mission-2025'

Context and Matters

What it was- *Justice Mission 2025* was a large-scale, two-day PLA exercise conducted around Taiwan in late December 2025, led by the PLA Eastern Theater Command, and involving multi-service participation (land, navy, air force, rocket force; and also, maritime law-enforcement elements).

Why it is significant- It fits China's pattern of using calibrated coercion—regular drills that normalize pressure, rehearse operational plans, and signal resolve to Taiwan and external actors.

Core Objectives

1) Sovereignty assertion and political messaging - China framed the drills as essential to safeguard "national sovereignty and territorial integrity" and deter "Taiwan independence."

2) Deterrence against "external interference" - A notable messaging element was explicitly warning against external interference, particularly in the context of U.S.-Taiwan defence cooperation.

3) Operational readiness and blockade rehearsal - The exercise focused on blockade scenarios, joint seizure of comprehensive superiority, and combat readiness patrols, indicating rehearsals for anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) and coercive blockade options.

Linkage with US-Taiwan Arms Package - The drills occurred amid heightened China-US-Taiwan tensions following a ~US\$11.1 billion U.S. arms package notification/procedure involving multiple systems (including HIMARS, self-propelled howitzers, missiles, and support items). China leveraged the arms-sale narrative to frame Taiwan's defence buildup as provocation and to justify punitive drills.

Key Features of the Exercise

Multi-domain "three-dimensional deterrence" - The exercise showcased synchronized operations across sea, air, and ground/rocket forces, aiming to demonstrate jointness and rapid escalation control.

Live-fire and blockade simulation - Reports highlighted extended live-fire activity and simulated blockade practice around key approaches to Taiwan, aligned with a coercive encirclement template rather than only symbolic signaling.

Scale and operational disruption - The drills reportedly caused significant aviation and route disruption, reflecting how such exercises can impose economic and logistical pressure even short of conflict.

Important factual caution on specific numbers

Your notes mention "130 sorties, 90 crossing the centreline, and 10 rockets landing in Taiwan's contiguous zone." The most reliable open reporting available in major wires/public sources during this event cycle emphasizes live-fire/blockade rehearsal and large aircraft/ship counts, but I did not find consistent, high-confidence confirmation of those exact figures across reputable sources in this search set. For exam purposes, it is safer to write "large-scale sorties, centreline crossings and live-fire proximity signalling" rather than lock to those exact numbers unless your source is an official brief.

Impact on India's Strategic Interests

1) Security architecture and threat perception - India reads Taiwan-centric drills as part of a broader PLA posture

1. Joint-force demonstration (multi-domain integration),
2. Escalation dominance signalling, and
3. Reinforcement of China's willingness to use military coercion in disputes.

This interacts with India's concerns from persistent PLA pressure across theatres (continental + maritime), increasing the salience of two-front planning and integrated deterrence.

2) Indo-Pacific strategy- reinforcing "collective deterrence" logic - The drill strengthens the case within India's Indo-Pacific approach for

1. Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) upgrades,
2. Greater operational coordination with partners, and
3. Increased relevance of coalition signalling (Quad and minilaterals).

The blockade rehearsal angle is especially relevant to planning around chokepoints and SLOC security.

3) Maritime trade and energy security implications - Escalation in/around the Taiwan Strait can

1. Disrupt shipping routes,
2. Raise war-risk insurance and freight costs,
3. Create knock-on effects across Indo-Pacific logistics, including routes linked to India's East Asia trade and energy flows.

Even "exercise-induced" disruptions can demonstrate how quickly normal commercial aviation/shipping patterns can be affected.

4) Defence modernisation lessons for India - PLA emphasis on joint operations and blockade/strike integration underlines India's need to accelerate

1. Joint planning and integrated theatre-level command-and-control,
2. Network-centric ISR (satellites, drones, undersea sensors, data fusion),
3. Long-range precision and counter-A2/AD thinking,
4. Resilient communications and electronic warfare hardening.

5) Diplomatic balancing- One-China vs pragmatic engagement with Taiwan - India is likely to continue a dual-track approach

1. Formal adherence to "One China" style positioning,
2. Quiet expansion of functional ties (technology supply chains, trade, education/skills) where feasible, while avoiding overt political triggers.

6) Regional partner dynamics (Japan, Southeast Asia) - The episode sharpened regional threat perceptions, pushing greater coordination among like-minded states and adding urgency to

1. Maritime logistics access,
2. Intelligence sharing,
3. Joint exercises and interoperability.

Conclusion and Way Forward

Strategic takeaway- *Justice Mission 2025* signals China's continued move toward routine, scalable, joint coercive drills that can rapidly shift from signalling to operational shaping.

India's policy direction (likely)

1. Strengthen maritime posture and persistent ISR in key approaches,
2. Upgrade coalition interoperability (exercises, logistics, information sharing),
3. Build supply-chain resilience (critical tech and semiconductors),
4. Maintain diplomatic calibration—avoid unnecessary escalation while supporting rules-based stability.

Source- <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/what-is-behind-chinas-latest-military-drills-around-taiwan-explained/article70535016.ece>