GLOBAL VOICE

Rising submarine fleet, military drills heighten tensions in the Taiwan Strait

-: Trinity Mirror Online Team :-

Recent satellite images on Google Maps have brought renewed attention to China's expanding submarine capabilities, revealing at least six nuclear-powered submarines docked at the First Submarine Base near Qingdao. The facility, strategically located along the Yellow Sea, grants the Chinese navy quick access to key maritime zones including the East China Sea and the Sea of Japan—areas of increasing geopolitical significance.

The images, shared by Australian naval analyst Alex Luck on X (formerly Twitter), reportedly show five active nuclear-powered submarines, including two Type 091s, two advanced Type 093As, and an unidentified vessel that may be undergoing decommissioning. Notably, China's lone Type 092 ballistic missile submarine is also visible, although it has largely been succeeded by the more modern Type 094 class.

This show of maritime strength comes at a time of growing regional unease, especially as tensions persist across the Taiwan Strait. In response, Taiwan has launched a 14-day military readiness program as part of its annual Han Kuang exercises. The first phase includes U.S.-assisted computer simulations to test scenarios ranging from full-scale invasions to "grey zone" pressure tactics, where China applies coercive force short of open warfare.

Taiwan's drills will also feature live-fire exercises in July, testing new equipment such as M1A2T Abrams tanks, HIMARS rocket systems, and upgraded anti-ship missiles. Defence Minister Wellington Koo emphasized that these efforts simulate a potential Chinese invasion scenario in 2027—a date often mentioned in strategic forecasts.

Meanwhile, China has staged its own show of strength with recent two-day military drills near Taiwan, which included live-fire operations and the deployment of large hybrid vessels. These structures, which function like floating bridges, may offer new options for quickly moving armored vehicles and troops across the Taiwan Strait—drawing comparisons to the portable harbors used during the Allied landings on D-Day.

Satellite imagery has also confirmed the construction of at least five large barges capable of transporting troops and tanks—raising concerns about China's ability to mobilize the estimated 1.2 million troops potentially needed for a full-scale invasion.

Peace must not shatter

These military build-ups, both on land and at sea, signal a dangerous escalation in the region. While nations have the right to maintain robust defense systems, the intensification of preparations and rhetoric surrounding Taiwan increases the risk of miscalculation. Asia, home to more than half the world's population and key global trade routes, cannot afford the consequences of open conflict in the Taiwan Strait.

Diplomatic channels must remain open. The world's powers—including regional stakeholders—must urgently promote dialogue, confidence-building measures, and clear communication to prevent an arms race from turning into armed confrontation. A stable Asia benefits not only the region but global peace and economic continuity.

The time to act is now—before strategic posturing turns into a tragic historical turning point.

Xi hails Hanoi's camaraderie & brotherhood

Chinese President Xi Jinping on Tuesday urged China and Vietnam to jointly oppose power politics and unilateralism when meeting with Vietnamese President Luong Cuong during his state visit to Vietnam.

Xi extended warm congratulations on the 95th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV), the 80th anniversary of the founding of Vietnam and the 50th anniversary of the liberation of the South.

Noting that this year marks the 75th anniversary of China-Vietnam diplomatic ties and the China-Vietnam Year of People-to-People Exchanges, Xi said over the past 75 years, China-Vietnam relations have evolved from the traditional friendship featuring "camaraderie plus brotherhood" to a community with a shared future that carries strategic significance, setting a good example of friendly mutual assistance, solidarity and cooperation between countries.

Standing at a new historical starting point, China is ready to work with Vietnam in line with the overarching goals characterised by "six mores" to strengthen strategic communication, enhance solidarity and coordination, and join hands in advancing their respective modernization processes, so as to write a new chapter of unity, self-strengthening, mutual benefit and win-win results among socialist countries, and constantly demonstrate the regional and global influence of the China-Vietnam community with a shared future.

Xi called on China and Vietnam to respond to the external uncertainties with friendly cooperation and socialist strengths, and propel the ship of the China-Vietnam community with a shared future to sail along the right waterway.

Xi said that politically, the two countries should steer the course forward steadily, maintain high-level strategic communication, strengthen mutual learning on party and state governance, jointly improve the two parties' leadership capability, and work together to ensure the steady development of their respective socialist paths.

On security, the two countries should forge an anchor of solidarity, and take the upgrade of the "3+3" strategic dialogue on diplomacy, defense and public security as an opportunity to continue to deepen security cooperation on defense and law enforcement, Xi said. China supports Vietnam in preparing for the 14th National Congress of the CPV and safeguarding its national sovereignty, security and development interests, he added.

Economically, the two countries should keep a firm grip on the oars of cooperation, create greater synergy between development strategies, and implement well the cooperation plan on synergizing the Belt and Road Initiative and the Two Corridors and One Economic Circle strategy.

The two sides should deepen multidimensional connectivity in railways, highways and aviation, ensure stable and unimpeded industrial and supply chains, expand cooperation in emerging fields such as 5G, artificial intelligence and green development, and empower the all-round cooperation between the two countries with new quality productive forces.

On people-to-people ties, the two sides should raise the sail of friendship, make this year's China-Vietnam Year of People-to-People Exchanges a success, implement more "small and beautiful" livelihood projects, and make China-Vietnam friendship resonate in the hearts of the two peoples with cultural, tourism, media and sub-national exchanges, Xi said.

Xi pointed out that in recent years, the role of the United Nations has been challenged, as unilateralism has clearly been on the rise and protectionism is making a comeback. Trade wars will undermine the international trading system, the stability of the global economic order and the legitimate interests of all countries in the world, especially developing countries, he said.

As key members of the Global South, China and Vietnam should strengthen coordination and cooperation, safeguard the international system with the United Nations at its core and the international order based on international law, and fulfill their responsibilities in promoting the building of a community with a shared future for mankind, said Xi.

Luong Cuong described Xi's visit to Vietnam as a historic one, noting that Xi and General Secretary of the CPV Central Committee To Lam have reached extensive consensus on deepening bilateral comprehensive strategic cooperation, which will greatly strengthen mutual political trust, promote the bilateral friendship featuring "camaraderie plus brotherhood," and provide important strategic guidance for advancing the building of the Vietnam-China community with a shared future.

China has made great achievements in its development under the guidance of the Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, Luong Cuong said, adding that the Vietnamese side firmly believes that China will smoothly realize the Second Centenary Goal to build itself into a great modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious and beautiful, making greater contribution to regional and global peace and development.

Luong Cuong said China is a top priority in Vietnam's foreign relations. The Vietnamese party, state and people attach great importance to developing relations with China, firmly adhere to the one-China policy, resolutely oppose "Taiwan independence" separatist activities, support China's stand on issues related to Xinjiang, Xizang and Hong Kong, and oppose any external forces interfering in China's internal affairs, he said.

Vietnam is ready to maintain high-level exchanges with China, strengthen experience sharing on national governance, elevate the level of practical cooperation, and create more highlights in such fields as inter-connectivity, high technology and environmental protection, he said. Vietnam is also willing to boost people-to-people exchanges and consolidate public support for bilateral relations, strengthen multilateral coordination and cooperation to enhance the international influence of the two countries, and properly handle differences and maintain maritime stability, he added.