

DoD Releases Fiscal Year 2021 Freedom of Navigation Report



Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Barry (DDG 52) transits the Taiwan Strait during a routine transit in 2021. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Justin Stack*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Department of Defense released on April 1 its annual Freedom of Navigation Report for fiscal year 2021. During the period from Oct. 1, 2020, through Sept. 30, 2021, U.S. forces operationally challenged 37 different excessive maritime claims made by 26 different claimants throughout the world.

Excessive maritime claims are inconsistent with international law as reflected in the Law of the Sea Convention. They include a variety of restrictions on the exercise of navigation and overflight rights and other freedoms. Unlawful maritime claims – or incoherent theories of maritime

entitlements – pose a threat to the legal foundation of the rules-based international order. If left unchallenged, excessive maritime claims could limit the rights and freedoms enjoyed by every nation.

Upholding freedom of navigation as a principle supports unimpeded lawful commerce and the global mobility of U.S. forces. DoD's freedom of navigation operations demonstrate the United States will fly, sail, and operate wherever international law allows.

DoD's regular and routine operational challenges complement diplomatic engagements by the U.S. State Department and supports the longstanding U.S. national interest in freedom of the seas worldwide.

Each year, DoD releases an unclassified summarized FON Report identifying the broad range of excessive maritime claims that are challenged by U.S. forces. It also includes general geographic information to describe the location of FON assertions while still maintaining operational security of U.S. military forces.

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