

# EAST ASIA MILITARY MONITOR

VOLUME 5 | ISSUE 10

October 2022



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## CHINA

### **President Xi calls for more control of the Party over PLA and directs the military to fight and win local wars**

On 16 October President Xi Jinping in his [address](#) to the 20<sup>th</sup> Party Congress stated that elevating the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to world class standards is essential to build a modern socialist country in all respects. To that end, the party cadres must apply the Party's thinking on strengthening the military for the new era, implement the military strategy for the new era, and maintain the Party's absolute leadership over the people's armed forces. Further, the cadres will work to enhance political loyalty in the military and strengthen Party building across the board in the people's armed forces to ensure that they always obey people's command. Subsequently, he stated that China would work to establish a strong system of strategic deterrence, and become more adept at deploying military forces on a regular basis and diversified ways. This shall enable China to shape its security posture, deter and manage crises and conflicts, and win local wars. Following the speech on accelerating China's military modernisation, Xi declared that on the question of Taiwan, China will never promise to renounce to use force. According to observers, the phrase "local war" was dropped in the 19<sup>th</sup> Party Congress work report and its mention in the present report could [imply](#) that China for now will focus and prepare for potential conflicts emanating in the Taiwan Straits as well as with neighbouring countries.

### **PLA's Military Modernisation**

Following the conclusion of the 20<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) more information emerged regarding China's military modernisation. The work report that was published after the

Congress, elaborated in detail China's plans for [military modernisation](#). Besides intensifying training under combat conditions, the work report emphasised that China will develop its armed forces through informatisation, application of smart technologies, induction of unmanned intelligent combat capabilities and high-tech training. With regard to modernising equipment and weapons systems, one of the delegates to the 20<sup>th</sup> Party Congress Chen Liu, stated that the J-20 fighters are now [deployed](#) in all five theatre commands and more are expected to enter service to replace their outdated predecessors. On the other hand, the PLA Navy has commissioned a new Frigate Type 054A, *Ziyang* in the PLA Eastern Theatre Command to [enhance](#) the Navy's capabilities. The warship will likely enhance China's anti-ship and anti-submarine warfare capabilities. Reportedly, before the 20<sup>th</sup> National Congress the PLA Navy [conducted](#) a full test for an amphibious transport group consisting of two Type 075 amphibious assault ships in the South China Sea.

### **Xi Jinping Met Top-Ranking Officers after 20<sup>th</sup> Party Congress**

Xi Jinping [met](#) many top-ranking officers after the 20<sup>th</sup> Party Congress and urged them to focus on the goals set by the leadership for 2027. According to Xi, "all military units are to strictly follow the Central Military Commission's annual plan and ensure the punctual completion of their tasks for 2022". He urged that armed forces must have a thorough understanding of the Party's thought on strengthening the military and apply it to build a world-class military. According to the Communiqué of the fifth plenary session of the 19th CPC Central Committee, the PLA should reach the centennial goal of building a modern military and take necessary steps in both

national defence capabilities and economic strength.

## JAPAN

### Joint Command by 2024

With escalating regional tensions, Japan is [reportedly](#) establishing a new joint command and a new commanding officer position by 2024 to supervise all three Self-Defense Force (SDF) units including the Ground, Maritime, and Air Self-Defense Forces, and further deepen coordination with the US. This move comes as defence planners are currently revising three key security documents. The goal is to ease the burden on the Chief of Staff. In case of a Taiwan contingency, the primary responsibility of the Chief of Staff would be to support the Prime Minister and Defense Minister, and the new integrated commanding officer under the Chief of Staff would have the authority to command forces.

### Japan considers getting Tomahawk cruise missiles

Japan is reportedly considering [purchasing Tomahawk](#) cruise missiles, having a range of over 1,000 kilometres, with the objective of bolstering its defence capabilities in anticipation of a Taiwan contingency. The Defense Ministry at present is weighing the advantages and disadvantages of acquiring this specific “counterstrike” capability. The idea is to retrofit and operate the vertical launchers of the Aegis vessels. Additionally, Japan is also working to advance the domestically produced Type 12 surface-to-ship guided missile. Since mass production of the Type 12 missile may be time consuming, Tokyo plans to urgently deploy the Tomahawk.

## TAIWAN

### Taiwan reacts to Xi Jinping’s speech at the 20<sup>th</sup> Party Congress

Following Xi’s declaration that Beijing will never promise to renounce use of force to unify Taiwan, Taipei in an official statement asserted that the government will never back down on its sovereignty or compromise its political system. The statement issued by the President’s office said that “Taiwan’s position is firm: no backing down on national sovereignty, no compromise on democracy and freedom, and meeting on the battlefield is absolutely not an option for the two sides of the Taiwan Strait”. Taiwan’s premier Su Tseng-chang speaking to the media stated that Xi Jinping should pay attention to domestic protests, rather than always thinking about using force to deal with Taiwan.

### Taiwan semiconductor manufacturing companies driven by commercial interests

Reportedly, the founder of the Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC) Morris Chang had openly [expressed his doubt](#) to the US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi about America’s efforts to rebuild its chip manufacturing base, during the latter’s visit to Taiwan. According to a report published by the *Financial Times*, Chang’s negative comments about US efforts were the reason for the fall of TSMC stocks by nearly 4 per cent on 24 October. In this context it should be noted that while Taiwan commands “20% of global semiconductor capacity...and produces 92% of the most advanced chips,” the US share has gone down from “37% in 1990 to 12% in 2020.”

Thus, rebuilding capacity is actually not going to be an easy task for the US. The experts contend that for the US to reduce its reliance on Taiwan all three major producers—TSMC, Samsung and Intel – will have to move their advanced facilities on a large scale to the US. Further, even if the US is able to increase the production of advanced chips, major sectors such as the auto industry and defence contractors will still be reliant on foreign manufacturers as they often use less advanced chips. Incidentally, days before the report was published the Taiwanese government had [issued a statement](#) conveying that Taiwanese semiconductor companies shall comply with new US export controls that aim to hobble China's chip industry. However, the semiconductor manufacturing companies TSMC or the United Microelectronics Corp 2303 have declined to comment on the US rules. These developments, seen in a broader context, demonstrate that despite showing solidarity with the government, Taiwanese chip manufacturers may have pure commercial concerns which might transcend geopolitical considerations.

## THE KOREAN PENINSULA

### **South Korean Marine Corps participate as observers in KAMANDAG Exercise for the first time**

In order to improve joint operational capabilities with friendly nations, the South Korean Marine Corps participated as observers for the first time in the KAMANDAG Exercise conducted in the Philippines. The international exercise took place from 3 to 14 October and 3,300 personnel from South Korea, the United States, the Philippines, and Japan participated in the Exercise on the Philippine Island of Luzon. According to the [Yonhap News Agency](#), South Korea

dispatched about 120 troops, who flew to Philippines on a C-130 transport jet.

The exercises in KAMANDAG included a number of training sessions for the troops, including ones on medical support, airborne infiltrations, maritime search, and joint amphibious landing operations. [Reuters](#) noted that KAMANDAG, which stands for "Cooperation of the warriors of the sea" in Filipino language, involved 2,550 American and 530 Filipino personnel. It featured island-based drills involving amphibious landings, live fire, and humanitarian aid.

### **North Korea fires two ballistic missile in response to South Korea's military Exercise**

North Korea launched two short-range ballistic missiles (SRBMs) off its east coast on 28 October 2022, when South Korean forces were wrapping up their Hoguk 22 field exercises, a two-week drill aimed at deterring its northern neighbour. According to [Reuters](#), the SRBMs were launched from the Tongcheon region in the North's Gangwon province, four days after the neighbours exchanged warning shots off the Korean Peninsula's west coast. Citing the US Military's Indo-Pacific Command, [CNN](#) stated that the launches do not constitute an imminent danger to the US or its allies; however, they illustrate the destabilising impact of North Korea's illegal weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programmes.

North Korea responded by emphasising that its recent missile launches were a form of protest against the provocative drills by the US and South Korea.