

# EAST ASIA MILITARY MONITOR

VOLUME 7 | ISSUE 9

SEPTEMBER 2024



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## CHINA

### PLA Western Theatre Command 77<sup>th</sup> Group Army Conducts Live-Fire Shooting Drill at an Altitude of 4,500 meters

In mid-September, a brigade of the [PLA Ground Force 77th Group Army](#) mobilized its vehicle-mounted howitzer detachment in the hinterland of the snowy Kunlun Plateau at an altitude of more than 4,500 meters to carry out a live-fire exercise. The vehicle-mounted howitzer with high degree of automation was used for the exercise. This [live-fire shooting drill](#) covers artillery firing, air defense, special operations, as well as multiple subjects such as tactical coordination, electronic countermeasures, and logistics support. It simulates actual combat scenarios and aims to test and improve the joint combat capabilities of various combat units in plateau environments. Li Xin, PLA officer of the 77th Group Army said, this plateau live-fire shooting exercise adopted the military tactics of extraction, destruction, and annihilation, and used multiple types of ammunition to achieve point-to-point precision strikes on the enemy, effectively testing the officers and soldiers' ability to accurately strike and destroy the entire area under the high-altitude and cold conditions of the plateau.

### China's Intercontinental Ballistic Missile Test

Amidst rising tensions in the Indo-Pacific, Beijing on 25 September announced the successful launch of an Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) into Pacific Ocean as part of '[routine military training exercise](#)'. The pictures released online by *China Junhao* (China's military media

wing), indicate that the missile launched was a [Dong Feng-31](#) (DF-31)AG, one of China's newest and most advanced ICBMs. Reportedly, during the test, the missile exhibited a [range of 12000kms](#), making it capable of reaching targets in most of the continental US. The [official statement](#) from China's Ministry of National Defense stated that the missile test carried out by People's Liberation Army (PLA) Rocket Force (PLARF) was part of routine arrangement and not directed against any country. China's Defense Ministry Spokesperson, Zhang Xiaogang, in a media briefing claimed that the test was conducted to assess the performance of the troops' weapons, equipment, and training levels. Responding to the missile test, Japan observed that [China's rapid military build-up](#) is a major concern and New Zealand stated that the tests were unwelcome. However, the United States (US), [praising Beijing's transparency](#) in the ICBM launch, stated that China had notified Washington in advance to prevent miscalculation.

### China Responds to US Arms Sales to Taiwan

The Chinese government, once again issued a [strong warning](#) to Taiwan and the US' regarding any efforts to promote Taiwan independence. In response to a query about US' intention to sell more arms to Taiwan, the Chinese Defense Ministry spokesperson reiterated that the PLA would decisively counter any attempt to separate Taiwan from China. As a demonstration of its displeasure, China also imposed sanctions on nine US companies involved in the sale of [military equipment](#) to Taiwan. These [sanctions target companies](#) such as Sierra Nevada Corporation, Stick Rudder Enterprises LLC, and Cubic Corporation,

among others. The sanctions are in response to a recent US arms sale worth 228 million dollars, which included spare parts and related equipment for Taiwan's military. Notwithstanding the sanctions, the Joe Biden administration recently approved 567 million dollars in [security assistance](#) to Taiwan under the Presidential Drawdown Authority.

## JAPAN

### Chinese Aircraft Carrier Sails through Japan's Contiguous Sea

On 18 September, China's aircraft carrier *Liaoning*, accompanied by two destroyers, was reported by Japanese media to have [crossed](#) its contiguous zone just outside territorial waters. This marked the first time that such an intrusion into contiguous waters has been conducted by the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), and follows on from another first; the intrusion of a Chinese surveillance aircraft into Japanese airspace in late August.

According to Japanese Ministry of Defence (MoD), the *Liaoning* and its escort component transited a narrow strait that lies between Yonaguni and Iriomote, two of Japan's southwestern-most islands in the Okinawa Island chain. Yonaguni is located only 120 kilometres from Taiwan. The MoD reported that the ships navigated strictly through the contiguous seas and did not stray into territorial waters. In a press conference later that day, Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiroshi Moriya told reporters that Japan had conveyed its 'serious concerns' to the Chinese side and called such actions 'utterly unacceptable in terms of [Japan's] security environment'. However, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Lin Jian dismissed

Japanese concerns and claimed that the transit was 'in compliance with China's domestic and international laws'. China's Ministry of Defence also [dismissed](#) Japanese concerns as 'over-interpretation' and claimed that the *Liaoning* was on a so-called 'routine training mission' in the Pacific Ocean. Tokyo has stated that it will continue to monitor Chinese naval activity around the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands and the Okinawa island chain.

## TAIWAN

### Taiwan-US Military Cooperation

The Director of the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT), Raymond Greene, recently [suggested](#) that it was possible for the US to include Taiwan as one of the many partners in joint weapons production. Greene specifically mentioned [drones of the future](#) as a potential area of cooperation which could create a secure defense supply chain between the two countries.

In a separate development, Taiwan has received the first shipment of [100 land-based Harpoon](#) anti-ship missile systems from the US. This is part of a larger deal for 400 missiles, launchers, and radar trucks that was approved by the US government in 2020.

In addition, the US has [announced](#) a military aid package worth up to \$567 million for Taiwan under the Presidential Drawdown Authority (PDA). This package, the largest of its kind to date, will fund training, stockpiles, and various weapons systems. Furthermore, Taiwanese troops have been undergoing training at Camp Grayling in Michigan, further strengthening the military cooperation between the two countries.

## THE KOREAN PENINSULA

### North Korea's Missile Tests

North Korea tested multiple [short-range ballistic missiles](#) on 12 September. The South Korean media citing [Japanese and South Korean](#) sources reported that the missiles flew about 360 kilometers and went up to a height of 100 kilometers. The missiles tested are believed to be “super-large KN-25 SRBMs”. North Korea again [tested](#) multiple short-range missiles on 18 September. Earlier, in September, the North Korean leader Kim Jong-un had called on to [substantially increase](#) the nuclear arsenal of the country. Also, the Russian Secretary of Security Council, Sergei Shoigu [visited North Korea](#) and met with Kim Jong-un on 13 September.

### South Korea Replace Surveillance Cameras

The South Korean military was reported in September to be replacing about 1,300 [surveillance cameras](#) installed at several military units, as they were found to be of Chinese-origin and were regarded as security threat. These cameras were allegedly capable of passing recorded information to a Chinese server. In another report, USS Vermont, a nuclear-powered submarine [visited](#) Busan, South Korea on 23 September.