

EAST ASIA MILITARY MONITOR

VOLUME 9 | ISSUE 5

MAY 2026



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CHINA

China Building Launch Pads near Nuclear Silos

Satellite imageries have [revealed](#) that China is constructing a massive military infrastructure network in its remote northwestern desert, situated near isolated nuclear silos holding the PLA's longest-range intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs). The complex consists of over 80 launch pads, hardened bunkers, electronic warfare facilities, and advanced communication nodes. The network is built around around two large, octagon-shaped facilities that are connected by roads, railheads, airfields, and fiber-optic conduits. Defence and security analysts have assessed that these pads are uniquely engineered to deploy mobile air-defence missiles, truck-mounted mobile ICBM launchers, or electronic warfare systems. The primary strategic objective of this rapid expansion is to reinforce China's land-based nuclear forces against any preemptive strike. By safeguarding these assets, Beijing aims to guarantee a robust "second-strike capability", ensuring it retains the power to retaliate even if a foreign adversary attempts a surprise first strike on its primary silos. This grand-scale [infrastructure](#) development signals a critical, high-tech upgrade in Beijing's nuclear modernization efforts. It underscores China's intensifying efforts to secure a strategic advantage amid rising geopolitical tensions and escalating nuclear competition with the United States (US).

A New-Unit of Y-20B Transport Aircraft Deployed in Western Theatre Command

Chinese state media CCTV's "Military Report" program [released](#) a footage on 10

May showing deployment of Y-20B transport aircraft in the People's Liberation Army (PLA)'s Western Theatre Command. The released video displayed a panoramic view of at least eight to nine Y-20B transport aircrafts. The Y-20B is the [latest](#) model of Y-20 transport aircraft of the PLA Air Force equipped with indigenous WS-20 high-bypass turbofan engine. The new engine has improved the aircraft's overall performance with its new maximum take-off weight reaching 220 tons and payload exceeding 66 tons, thereby, effectively meeting take-off and landing requirements in complex high-altitude environments. The report [claimed](#) that the production capacity of Y-20B has surged due to successful development and production of WS-20 turbofan engine. As of May 2026, the number of Y-20s transport aircraft in the PLA Air Force has reached around 100. The report also informed that the newly produced Y-20s, as well as later versions of the Y-20A, feature a multi-role configuration. These aircrafts can transport cargo or serve as serial refuelling tankers when equipped with refuelling pods. In the future, the number of Y-20Bs stationed at the PLA Western Theatre Command might increase.

An Artillery Unit Conducts Live-Fire Exercise in the Karakoram Plateau

In late May, an artillery unit of the PLA Xinjiang Military Command [conducted](#) a multi-service, multi-weapon coordinated live-fire exercise at an altitude of over 5,300 meters in the Karakoram Plateau. The exercise aimed to test and improve the artillery unit's capabilities in rapid maneuver, precision strikes, and system-wide coordination under high-altitude, low-oxygen conditions. During the exercise the

troops utilised information-based command and logistical support. The exercise used tactical scenarios that simulated various targets such as enemy's forward position, armoured formations, and concealed fortifications. The exercise tested the troops' emergency response and combat readiness. Reportedly, the drills introduced an innovative "manned-unmanned collaborative combat" model and also [aimed](#) to resolve challenges such as low coordination efficiency among firepower units, rapid degradation of equipment performance, and difficulties in maintaining communications. The tactics deployed during the tasks not only reduced the risk of personnel casualties but also significantly enhanced combat effectiveness, marking the force's intelligent modernisation. Simultaneously, logistics units carried out support operations such as delivering hot meals and providing medical aid to ensure the force maintained its combat readiness. The exercise demonstrated the artillery unit's transformation, characterised by "all-domain mobility, precision strikes, and system-based victory."

JAPAN

Japan Defence Minister Visits Indonesia, Philippines

Japan's Minister of Defence Shinjiro Koizumi [embarked](#) on a four-day trip to Indonesia and the Philippines as part of a push by Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's Cabinet to utilise a weeklong government holiday to engage key international partners diplomatically. Koizumi's mission during his trip was to explain the revisions made to Japan's arms transfer principles in April and to seek out expressions of interest in

Japanese equipment and technology. On 4 May, Koizumi [met](#) his Indonesian counterpart Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin in Jakarta, where he explained the new rules and conveyed Japan's desire to play a more active role in peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. Sjamsoeddin welcomed Japan's policy revision and its desire to collaborate with regional countries under the new system. The two countries also signed a Defence Cooperation Arrangement to formalise defence technology and equipment cooperation. It is notable that under the revised rules on arms sales, Japan would give preference to countries with which it has defence technology and equipment cooperation agreements in place.

On 5 May Koizumi, [met](#) his Philippine counterpart Gilberto Teodoro in Manila and called on President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. The two defence ministers agreed that 'unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion...observed in the surrounding waters of our two countries' (i.e. the East and South China Seas) necessitated enhanced maritime domain awareness. To that end, Japan and the Philippines agreed to explore working-level talks on the grant of five *Abukuma*-class destroyers to Manila. The *Abukuma*-class, now being replaced by the more advanced *Mogami*-class frigates, may be provided gratis to the Philippines should the necessary legal and bureaucratic hurdles be met. The Japanese side is also interested in providing TC-90 maritime training aircraft to the Philippines. At the end of the meeting, Teodoro welcomed Japan's revised arms export rules and expressed eagerness to produce 'demonstrable results at the soonest possible time'.

Japan, ROK Hold First Deputy-Ministerial 2+2 Talks

Japan and the Republic of Korea [held](#) the first iteration of 2+2 talks between the foreign and defence deputy chiefs of both sides in Seoul, marking the first upgrade since the director-general-level talks held since 1998. The meeting was [attended](#) on the Japanese side by Vice Foreign Minister Takehiro Funakoshi and Vice Defence Minister for International Affairs Koji Kano, while the ROK was represented by First Vice Foreign Minister Park Yoon Joo and Vice Defence Minister Lee Doo Hee. Both sides reviewed key strategic challenges and recent diplomatic developments in the broader Indo-Pacific region, including the West Asia situation. They agreed to maintain trilateral cooperation with the United States of America and to continue the dialogues as a part of the ‘shuttle diplomacy’ practiced by Japanese and ROK leaderships since 2022. The two US allies also agreed on participation in joint exercises with the US, but made no mention of the possibility of taking forward negotiations on a possible acquisition and cross-servicing agreement.

TAIWAN

Taiwan’s Defence Budget Approved

After a prolonged political tussle between the government and the opposition, Taiwan’s Legislative Yuan (parliament) [approved](#) a defence budget that has a cap of NT\$780 billion (around US\$ 25 billion), much less than the government’s demand of NT\$1.25 trillion (US\$39.77 billion). Reportedly, the government may bring a “a new special budget act to fund critical

defense programs” including “the ‘T-Dome,’ project, artificial intelligence (AI)-boosted kill chains and the indigenous arms industry.” Meanwhile, the media reported that the US has “[paused](#) a NT\$441.4 billion (US\$14 billion) arms sale to Taiwan” as it needed ammunition for the war with Iran. Yet, it was [noted](#) that 500 man-portable Stinger missiles out of the deal for a total of 2,621 missiles will be delivered by the year end. The US is to supply these missiles in two batches. Taiwanese Army and Navy each will receive half in the first batch of 500.

Taiwan’s Military Deployment

The Taiwanese media [reported](#) that Taipei is considering “to deploy US-supplied High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS) to outlying islands such as Penghu and Dongyin” to “extend strike coverage deep into China’s coastal provinces and potentially force People’s Liberation Army units to reposition more than 100 kilometers inland.” Thus, this deployment would strengthen “Taiwan’s early warning time and defense depth.”

Further, Taiwan’s first indigenous defense submarine, the SS-711 Hai Kun [conducted](#) “its 13th sea trial and its seventh submerged test.” It is to be delivered to the navy in next July. It would be [equipped](#) with “a combat system by Lockheed Martin Corp” and “US-made Mark 48 heavyweight torpedoes.” Separately, a 600-tonne Anping-class patrol vessel was “[launched](#).” This was the 12th and the final one built for the Coast Guard Administration (CGA). This completed the fleet, which has been built under indigenous shipbuilding

program. Furthermore, Taiwan's Air Force has [received](#) 56 Brave Eagle advanced jet trainers out of total 66 AIDC T-5 Brave Eagle aircrafts it will receive from its domestic fighter development program.

In a parallel development the Taiwanese army is [reorganising](#) its operational zone (Area Commands) and equipping them with formed drone battalions. It reorganised three of its combat operational zones in April 2026. It was reported that Taiwan [wants](#) to “increase its monthly drone production capacity from 15,000 units to 100,000 units by 2030.” Incidentally, the Asia UAV AI Innovation Application R&D Center in Chiayi County has [emerged](#) as “a key base... to to develop a trusted drone supply chain.” As for international collaboration, the Drone Diplomacy Task Force yesterday and the US-based Association for Uncrewed Vehicle Systems International (AUVSI) [contracted](#) a letter of intent (LOI) “to promote talent exchanges and international certification.”

THE KOREAN PENINSULA

South Korea's Defence Industry

In May 2026, South Korea's indigenously developed fighter jet KF-21 Boramae was reported to have received the final [approval](#) for being suitable for the combat operations. This development marked the success of South Korean efforts for building its own fighter jet technology and achieve self-reliance in defence production. Notably, it took more than ten years for South Korean engineers to develop this highly sophisticated weapon system. According to another report, South Korean President Lee Jae Myung [urged](#) the South

Korean officials to fast-track the development of nuclear-powered submarines in the country. South Korea has been aiming to develop its own nuclear-powered submarines after it got approval from the United States for building these weapon systems. Reportedly, South Korea has been facing increased threats from North Korea which has pushed Seoul to strengthen its self-defence capabilities.

North Korea to Deploy Howitzers along DMZ

In May 2026, it was reported that North Korea has been planning to [deploy](#) a “new-type 155 mm self-propelled gun-howitzers” by the end of this year near the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), which divides the two Koreas. These weapon systems were reported to have a striking range of more than 60 kilometres, and the presence of these self-propelled howitzers along North Korea's border with South Korea could pose a serious security threat to Seoul and its adjoining areas. The South Korean media [reported](#) that these North Korean howitzers appear similar to that of South Korea's own K9 Thunder howitzers, but are apparently more powerful. The South Korean military has been keeping an eye on North Korea's technological advancements in building more sophisticated weapon systems. Notably, South Korea's K9 Thunder howitzers have also gained significant popularity across the world and Seoul has exported them to several countries.