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CHINA

A Regiment of the Southern Xinjiang Military Region Organized a Multi-Service Coordinated Combat Training

In early December, a regiment of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) South Xinjiang Military Region's multiple combat forces such as electronic countermeasures, armored infantry, and anti-aircraft artillery [participated](#) in a multi-service coordinated combat training. The reconnaissance unit carried out three-dimensional reconnaissance drill using drones and electronic reconnaissance equipment. The training focused at improving multi-service coordinated combat training and exploring new tactics and training methods in actual combat training with the use of multi-professional data. Fighter planes were used during the training, and use of intelligent equipment and information sharing in real-time were practiced to improve combat operations. In a press statement the leader of the regiment [noted](#) that "on the battlefield of the future, the key to winning is to achieve complementary advantages of multiple factors through coordinated operations." He added that during the training, the forces also tried to integrate combat elements, manned forces and unmanned platforms, aiming to explore the advantages of forming multi-forces synthesis and mixed manned and unmanned formations. The report noted that in the next step, the regiment will focus on existing deficiencies, work with other PLA units to carry out targeted training, and will further improve the skills of intelligent equipment control and information system use to enhance the combat effectiveness of the troops.

China's New Amphibious Assault Ship

On 27 December, China [launched](#) a new amphibious ship *The Sichuan*. As the first ship of the Type 076, The Sichuan is China's largest ship yet. Reportedly, the ship has a full load displacement of 40,000 tons and is equipped with a double island superstructure, longitudinal flight deck and electromagnetic catapult which will allow fighter jets to launch directly off its deck. This ship also has arrester technology that will enable the fighter jets to land on its deck. According to a [Global Times report](#), *The Sichuan*, is world's first amphibious assault ship equipped with electromagnetic launching technology and also has amphibious assault capabilities that can carry amphibious battalion to the target area for landing operations. Further, it has "comprehensive combat capability", designed to conduct horizontal landing as well as airborne operations. The commissioning of *The Sichuan* is expected to enhance PLA Navy's ability to carry out far seas operations and multidimensional long range operations.

JAPAN

Japan Approves OSA Recipient Countries for 2025

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan intends to provide its new Official Security Assistance scheme to four countries for fiscal 2024, according to government sources [cited](#) by the Asahi Shimbun on 3 December. These sources stated that Mongolia and Djibouti will join previous recipients Indonesia and the Philippines as recipients of the untied assistance program launched by the Japanese government in 2023, which incurs no cost. The Philippines

is expected to receive further assistance to build another coastal surveillance radar in 2025, with further support possible beyond 2025, while projects in Indonesia, Mongolia and Djibouti have not yet been specified. Tokyo is expected to ink agreements with the latter three countries in early 2025, in order to select projects suitable for the approximately 5 billion yen (33 million US dollars) budget approved for the programme for fiscal 2024.

Japan and US Formulate Guidelines for Extended Deterrence

Amidst increasing concern in Japan over China and North Korea's actions and the US commitment to intervene, Tokyo and Washington declared their first guidelines for [extended deterrence](#) including US nuclear protection. Although the details of the document was not disclosed, it is reportedly aimed to strengthen the Japan-US alliance and deepen the existing consultation and communication procedures related to extended deterrence. According to the [press release](#) by Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, the document has been formulated as the Japan-US alliance "face an increasingly severe strategic and nuclear threat environment". Besides the guidelines will also, "address strategic messaging to maximize deterrence and enhance measures for U.S. extended deterrence, bolstered by Japan's defense capabilities".

TAIWAN

Taiwan's Indigenous Weapon Programme

The Taiwanese media [reported](#) that Taiwan's National Chung-Shan

Institute of Science and Technology (NCSIST) is mass-producing the *Ching Tien* supersonic cruise missile. The missile has a strike range of 1,200 to 2,000 km, placing Beijing within its range. The NCSIST also plans to increase its range beyond 2,000 km. The proposed upgraded version has been renamed as the "Ching Tien hypersonic cruise missile." Reportedly, the NCSIST is [working](#) on "a second type of loitering munition" to enhance Taiwan's precision strike capabilities. This will be an upgraded version of the *Chien Hsiang* anti-radiation loitering munition, capable of hitting targets from both mobile and static vehicles as well as in night time. Further, using an electro-optical seeker, the missile will carry a high-explosive warhead and an infrared imaging system.

Taiwan's 'Help' to the West

[Reportedly](#), Taiwan is considering to leverage its semiconductor industry to help the US and the western countries reduce their reliance on China for critical drone components required for civilian drone manufacturing. Incidentally, in 2022, Taiwan launched the "Drone National Team" initiative to boost commercial and military drones manufacturing and their deployment. It has a target of manufacturing 15,000 drones per month domestically by 2028.

THE KOREAN PENINSULA

Martial Law in South Korea

The South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol applied his powers to [declare](#) martial law in the country on 3 December 2024 due to the alleged "anti-state activities" by the

members of the opposition parties. The martial law was later [lifted](#) after the National Assembly of South Korea passed a resolution against its imposition. The Defence Minister of South Korea Kim Yong-hyun [resigned](#) as a result of his alleged role in the aborted martial law implementation. Kim was replaced by Choi Byung-hyuk. On 14 December, the National Assembly [voted](#) for the impeachment of President Yoon.

North Korean Soldiers Killed in Russia

An estimated 100 North Korean soldiers were reported to have been [killed](#) in the Russian Kursk region while fighting against the Ukrainian troops in December 2024. There are speculations that at least 1,000 North Korean soldiers were also injured. However, the United States [believed](#) that the number of deaths of North Korea soldiers may be “several hundred”. According to the National Intelligence Service (NIS) of South Korea, about 11,000 North Korean soldiers have been dispatched by Pyongyang to the Russian border areas with Ukraine to fight in the ongoing Ukraine war.