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## CHINA

### Chinese Defence Ministry Protest against US National Defense Authorisation Act 2023

China's spokesperson for the Minister of National Defence Tan Kefei [voiced dissatisfaction and opposition](#) to the China-related content in the US National Defense Authorisation Act (NDAA) 2023. Speaking to the media on 24 December 2022, he commented that the negative provisions related to China not only undermine China's sovereignty, its security and development interests, but also harm relations between the militaries of the two countries. Further, the provisions of the Act groundlessly paint China as a threat and recklessly interfere in China's internal affairs to find excuses for the United States to increase military spending and maintain hegemony. Adding to the Defence Ministry's statement, China's foreign ministry [declared](#) that "The case ignores the facts to exaggerate a 'China threat', wantonly interferes in China's internal affairs and attacks and smears the Chinese Communist Party, which are serious political provocations to China."

### PLA holds exercise around Taiwan

On 25 December 2022, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Eastern Theatre Command [conducted](#) the joint combat-readiness security patrol and joint firepower striking exercise. The joint exercises were conducted in the waters and airspace around Taiwan and involved troops of multiple services and arms. [Reportedly](#), H-6 strategic bomber and the Type 052C guided missile destroyer was used during

the exercise. Senior Colonel Shi Yi, a spokesperson of the PLA Eastern Theatre Command [declared](#) in a media briefing that the exercises were a firm response to the provocation caused by the US defence act that includes security assistance and fast-track weapon supply to Taiwan worth US\$ 10 billion. He added that the troops of the PLA's Eastern Theatre Command will take all [necessary measures](#) to resolutely safeguard national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

### PLA's Liaoning Aircraft Carrier in the Western Pacific

The PLA conducted its [naval drill](#) in the Western Pacific waters in a year-end drill. The carrier group with two Type 055 destroyers have been conducting drills with fighter jets and helicopters landing and taking-off. The naval drill was considered significant as it showcased the increasing ability of the PLA Navy to break the first island chain and sail close to Guam in the second island chain. According to Chinese experts, Guam is considered as a "forward operating base" for all military services, and the recent drill highlighted the PLA Navy's ability to seize air superiority and control of the sea. It is also said that many [powerful warships](#) such as the Anshan and Wuxi Type 055 stealth missile destroyer, the Chengdu Type 052D guided-missile destroyer, the *Zaozhuang* Type 054A frigate, and the *Hulunhu* replenishment ships were deployed. The PLA Navy is likely to conduct more naval drills away from its first island chain in the coming years, intensifying the maritime competition between the US and China.

## JAPAN

### PM Fumio Kishida approve major defence overhaul

Following months of debate over Tokyo's defence and security policies, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida [passed revisions to three key security documents](#) on 16 December 2022. Reportedly, the revisions to the National Security Strategy (NSS), the National Defence Strategy (NDS) and Defence Buildup Programme demonstrate that Japan is ready to forego some of the post-War constraints imposed on its military. The important revisions to these documents include the decision to acquire counter-strike capabilities to deter enemy attacks, allocation of US\$ 315 billion for defence spending over five years from fiscal 2023 and setting a target of boosting annual defence outlays to around 2 per cent of the GDP in fiscal 2027. Addressing the media at the Prime Ministers' Office, Prime Minister Kishida observed that the new security policy is a major shift from the post-War security policy. However, the changes are within the scope of the Constitution and that the country's exclusively defence-oriented policy would remain in place.

### Japan-UK-Italy announce the Global Combat Air Programme

In early December, [Japan-UK-Italy announced](#) their Global Combat Air Programme that aims to field sixth-generation fighter by 2035. Mitsubishi Heavy Industries together with UK's BAE Systems and Italy's Leonardo will work on the fighter. Japanese Defence Minister, Hamada Yasukazu argued that it is the start

of a new era of cooperation that will "encourage innovation in our country's broader economy and serve as a foundation for peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific as well as European regions". Japanese Air Self-Defense Force's (ASDF) current fighter jets including the F-35, F-15, and F-2 built either by American firms or developed in collaboration with American firms which helped in advancing interoperability. The Ministry was reportedly [negotiating with Lockheed Martin](#) to make a next-generation jet with Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, but not much progress was being achieved. Meanwhile, the UK wanted to update its Eurofighter jet; Italy is a joint developer of the Eurofighter.

## TAIWAN

### Taiwan to receive military aid from US under new defence act

Under the [NDAA 2023](#), Taiwan is set to receive US\$ 10 billion in military aid to bolster its defences against an invasion by China. The US has [decided](#) to provide an arms package worth US\$ 180 million. The media informed that this package would include Volcano anti-tank mine dispensing equipment among other items. Under a separate [defence deal](#), the US will sell Taiwan parts for ships worth US\$ 110.7 million. These parts are to be supplied within the next two years. Meanwhile, it is learnt that Taiwan is prepared to launch its first [domestically-developed](#) submarine by September 2023.

### Taipei extends compulsory military service to one-year

On 27 December 2022, President Tsai Ing wen declared the government's decision to

[extend mandatory military service](#) from four months to one year. Speaking at a press conference, President Tsai stated that “peace will not drop from the sky... Taiwan is on the frontline of authoritarian expansion”. She informed that the island's current defence system was inadequate to cope with aggression from China. Accordingly, the conscripts will undergo more intense training, borrowing some elements from the US and other advanced militaries. President Tsai added “this is an extremely difficult decision, but as president, as the head of military forces, it is my unavoidable duty to defend national interests and our democratic way of life.” The new rule will come into effect in January 2024 and around the same time when Taiwan will elect its next president.

## THE KOREAN PENINSULA

### South Korea and US stage combined air drills to strengthen credibility of America's extended deterrence

In a bid to strengthen the credibility of America's deterrence, South Korea and the US conducted combined air drills on 20 December 2022. The exercise involved US B-52 strategic bombers and F-22 stealth fighters and South Korean [F-35A stealth jets and F-15K fighters](#). According to the [Korea Times](#), the drills took place in South Korea's air defence identification zone, in response to North Korea's launch of two medium-range ballistic missiles (MRBM) on December 18, 2022. According to South Korea's government spokesperson, the training session contributed to enhancing interoperability and strengthening of operational capabilities.

### On the last day of the year, North Korea launches three missiles into the Sea of Japan

North Korea launched three short-range ballistic missiles towards the Sea of Japan on 31 December 2022. [Reportedly](#), the first ballistic missile was launched early in the morning, followed closely by the second and the third missile. All three missiles were launched from Pyongyang's suburbs. The launch came just days after North Korea allegedly flew drones into South Korean airspace for the first time since 2017, prompting Seoul to deploy fighter jets and helicopters to shoot down the unmanned aerial vehicles. As per [media reports](#), all three missiles travelled approximately 350 kilometres, reaching a maximum altitude of 100 kilometres before falling into waters of the Sea of Japan outside Japan's exclusive economic zone. The latest launches elicited strong opposition in Tokyo and Seoul. [Reuters](#) informed that alongside the latest launches, North Korea had launched around 70 ballistic missiles in 2022.