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CHINA

Xi Jinping directs the military to boost training and prepare for war

On 8 November, following the [onset of his third term](#), Chinese President Xi Jinping made the first visit to the joint operations command centre of the Central Military Commission (CMC). As reported by [Xinhua](#), Xi inspected the joint operations command centre of the CMC and interacted with representatives of officers and soldiers of the command centre and called on the military to enhance troop training and combat preparedness. He also said that the entire military should devote all its energy to, and carry out, all its work for combat readiness, enhance its capability to fight and win, and effectively fulfil its missions and tasks in the new era. Reminding the army of the importance of adhering to Party principles, Xi instructed the armed forces to thoroughly study, publicize and implement the guiding principles of the 20th CPC National Congress and take concrete steps to further modernize national defence and the military. Earlier, in his address to the 20th Party Congress, Xi had called for urgent development of strategic deterrence, combat capabilities along with strengthening of Party's control over the military. According to [observers](#), Xi in recent years, has visibly stepped up the rhetoric of combat preparedness, probably in view of the increasing tensions with the neighbouring countries and the US.

Chinese Defence Minister meets US Secretary of Defense

The Chinese Defence Minister Wei Fenghe held talks with his US counterpart on the sidelines of the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus). The two

leaders met on 22 November and discussed issues of mutual concern including responsible management of Sino-US competition and maintaining open lines of communication. The two sides provided different accounts about the discussion on Taiwan and the Indo-Pacific. The US [press briefing](#) stated that Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III raised concern about People's Liberation Army (PLA)'s increasing aggressive behaviour in the Indo-Pacific. Further, he expressed his opposition to the unilateral changes of status-quo and called on China to refrain from undertaking destabilising action towards Taiwan. Contrarily, the Chinese [press statement](#) did not mention anything about Sino-US competition in the Indo-Pacific. Instead, it highlighted Wei Fenghe's warning to the US Secretary of Defense against interfering in the settlement of the Taiwan question.

PLA Navy Modernisation

The PLA Navy continues to [modernise](#) and deploy new weapons systems and ships. China's Type 075 amphibious assault ships Hainan and Guangxi completed their training programmes, which focused on multidimensional troop delivery, self-defence, missile interception. The PLA's [third assault ship](#), the *Anhui* for the first time conducted training in actual-combat conditions and said to have entered active service. Additionally, the PLA Navy's [Type 055 destroyer](#), the *Anshan* achieved operational capability after passing the test for three-day training course with other weapons platforms such as the Type 052D destroyers such as Baotou and Qiqihar. The destroyer would be deployed in the Northern Theatre Command that looks at the Korean peninsula.

JAPAN

Japanese Government calls on the public to pay for defence build-up

Reportedly, on 22 November a government panel urged “the whole nation” to shoulder a [heavier financial burden](#) in terms of higher taxes to help the country enhance its defence capabilities in the face of increasing security challenges. The panel also upheld the ruling Liberal Democratic Party’s proposal for Japan to acquire an enemy base strike capability, or counter-strike capability to enhance Japan’s deterrence power. Further, highlighting the importance of securing stable financial resources, the panel discussed the possibility for the Japanese government to make fresh reduction in expenditures to finance the defence build-up. The question of enhancing the corporate tax to fund the increase in defence cost was considered; however, the panel decided against such a move.

PM Fumio Kishida orders funds to raise Japan’s Defence budget

Considering the rising threat from China and North Korea and the increasing major power competition in the Indo-Pacific, PM Kishida [instructed](#) his defence and finance ministers to raise funds to support the increase of Japan’s defence budget to two per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). At present, Japan’s annual spending is about one per cent (5 trillion yen) of the GDP and the Defence Ministry has stated that 48 trillion yen will be required for the next five years to improve the country’s defence capabilities. Reportedly, PM Kishida held a meeting with the finance and the defence minister on 28 November where he urged them to look into budget and defence needs on an urgent basis. Speaking to a Budget Committee session in

the House of Representatives (HoR) he declared that the government will consider using funds set aside for counter-measures against COVID-19 once the pandemic settles.

TAIWAN

US does not think that China is ready to invade Taiwan

General Mark Milley, Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, recently [remarked](#) that the PLA is not yet ready to invade Taiwan as it does not have the required military capability. In a press conference held on 16 November, he observed that the invasion of Taiwan will require “moving Chinese soldiers across the Taiwan Strait and landing them on the shores of the country,” which “would be a ‘very difficult military task to do’.” He claimed that the PLA doesn’t “have the experience, the background to do it. “They haven’t trained to it yet. They do piece-part training. We watch it very, very closely, how many — how much amphibious capability they have, how much airborne capability they have.” Referring to Beijing’s political will to invade, the General expressed that Xi Jinping’s fears about the PLA facing a strategic debacle in an invasion campaign would restrain him from undertaking a military campaign against Taiwan in the near future.

Taiwan media reports about backlog of arms delivery by the US

The media noted that there is a [backlog of arms delivery](#) worth around US\$19 billion (NT\$589 billion) to Taiwan by the US. Apparently, this backlog is due to the US’ [focus on Ukraine](#). The held-up delivery of arms include “[an order for 208 Javelin antitank weapons](#)” and “[215 surface-to-air Stinger missiles](#).” Separately, the media

[informed](#) that the two sides “have signed a NT\$15.76 billion (US\$506.27 million) deal to maintain long-range early-warning radar systems.” The radars covered under this agreement are stationed “in the mountains of northern Taiwan” and have a range of “a maximum distance of at least 3,000 kilometers away.”

In a separate development, Taiwan’s National Chung-Shan Institute of Science and Technology (NCSIST) [ranks 60th](#) in the list of the world’s 100 largest weapons makers, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). The company sold US\$2 billion (NT\$61 billion) worth of arms in 2021. It is noteworthy that a Taiwanese company has found place in SIPRI’s list for the first time. Incidentally, the NCSIST is manufacturing a [single-rotor drone](#), which “can automatically plot its own flight route and land autonomously.” It has a range of more than 30 kilometres and “can continuously fly for more than one hour.” It “will be deployed for tactical reconnaissance and surveillance missions at sea and near coastal areas.”

THE KOREAN PENINSULA

South Korean Defense Minister holds bilateral talks with Cambodian and Australian counterparts for enhanced security cooperation

On 24 November, the defence ministers of South Korea and Cambodia met in Siem Reap to [discuss regional security and bilateral cooperation](#) in military logistics and other areas. This bilateral meeting took place on the sidelines of the ADMM-Plus. Reportedly, the two leaders [agreed](#) to sign a bilateral agreement to expand opportunities for boosting security cooperation and expanding exchanges between the armies of the two nations.

The meeting took place two days after the defence chiefs of Australia and South Korea met on 22 November, to discuss bilateral cooperation in the military sector and other security-related sectors. As per media reports, the [two sides agreed](#) to increase people-to-people contacts in the defence sector, organise greater number of bilateral and multilateral military drills, expand cooperation within the arms industry to improve interoperability between the two militaries. Further, they agreed to establish institutional mechanisms for joint military exercises, defence research and technology cooperation.

North Korea launches *Hwasong-17* ICBM as a part of its defence-building strategy

A day after threatening "fiercer military reactions" against Washington’s regional security posture, North Korea on 16 November conducted an intercontinental ballistic missile test. According to observers, the launch of the *Hwasong-17*, is part of North Korea's defence-building plan aimed to achieve the most powerful and absolute nuclear deterrence. Further, the missile is capable of [delivering a nuclear warhead](#) anywhere in the US. During the launch it was noted that the missile travelled approximately 1,000 kilometres in 69 minutes and reached a maximum height of 6,041 kilometres.

As a response to Pyongyang's missile launch, South Korea’s Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighters began training to target North Korean missile launchers. [Janes](#) reported that the exercise intended to improve the F-35 fleet's capabilities to hit North Korean missile-related installations.