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## CHINA

### China and the UAE "Falcon Shield-2024" Joint Exercise

On 10 July, China hosted the opening ceremony for the '[China-UAE Falcon Shield-2024](#)' joint air force training exercise in Xinjiang. The drills marked the second edition of the "Falcon Shield" series between China and the UAE. The ceremony was attended by the UAE deputy military attaché in China. According to the Chinese media reports, the training aimed to foster mutual understanding and trust, enhance cooperation between the two air forces, and strengthen the strategic partnership between the militaries of the two countries. Conversely, the UAE Ministry of Defense stated in its press statement that the "Falcon Shield-2024" exercise intended to execute joint air operations, exchange expertise, and boost the combat effectiveness of both the forces. The Ministry also noted that the exercise aimed to improve the combat readiness of the participating units and refine their abilities to counter air threats. The UAE Ministry of Defense shared photos indicating that the Chinese participants were flying J-16 and J-10C aircraft, while the UAE deployed Mirage 2000-9 fighters. This is the first time in recent years that Western-made third-generation fighter jets, such as the Mirage 2000-9, joined the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Air Force in joint training exercises in China.

### Chinese Navy Officer and PLA Ships in Russia's Naval Parade

Indicating [increasing security cooperation](#) between Beijing and Moscow, Admiral Hu

Zhongming visited Russia to attend the annual naval parade held on the occasion of Russia's Navy Day on 28 July. According to PLA's social media account, the Russian naval parade featured China's Type 052D guided missile destroyer *Jiaozuo* and Type 903A replenishment ship *Honghu*. Responding to this development observers noted that it was the first time in five years that China's Navy sent warships to participate in Russia's naval day celebrations. Reportedly, Hu during his visit to Russia also met the deputy defence minister Colonel General Alexander Fomin to discuss strategies to address maritime challenges and enhance naval cooperation between the two countries.

In separate developments, Russia and China conducted several naval and aerial exercises surrounding South China Sea and the Bering Sea in July.

## JAPAN

### JSDF Chief of Staff Reflects on 70th Anniversary

On 1 July, the Japanese Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) celebrated their 70th anniversary. In separate interviews marking this milestone, General Yoshihide Yoshida, the newly appointed Chief of Staff of the JSDF, shared his perspectives on how the force is adapting to Japan's evolving security needs and its future directions.

In an interview with the Yomiuri Shimbun, General Yoshida emphasized that the JSDF's primary mission is to [ensure deterrence](#), with a current focus on strengthening its capabilities in the Indo-Pacific region. He highlighted the strategic

challenges posed by China, North Korea, and Russia and suggested that close collaboration with the United States (US) and other like-minded countries is one of JSDF's core strategy

In a separate conversation with the Mainichi Shimbun, General Yoshida noted that the JSDF is facing a [critical situation](#) as the rules-based international order is under threat from China, North Korea, and Russia. He stressed the importance of increased cooperation with the US and other allied partners, both in the region and globally. He expressed particular concern over China's activities in the maritime domain near Japan, emphasizing the need for international collaboration to address these challenges.

General Yoshida also discussed the JSDF's forward deployment to the Nansei Shoto islands near the Senkaku (Diaoyu) islands, citing deterrence through denial as a key reason for this strategic positioning. He underscored the JSDF's commitment to civilian protection, distinguishing it from the Imperial Japanese Armed Forces' disregard for civilian lives during World War II.

Finally, addressing the issue of Japan's declining birth rate affecting recruitment, General Yoshida called for 'drastic reforms' and highlighted ongoing efforts to create a more inclusive and diverse workplace within the JSDF.

### **Japan-South Korea-US Chiefs of Staff Meeting**

On 18 July, the top military leaders from Japan, South Korea, and the United States

convened in Tokyo to discuss [strategies to expand cooperation and enhance military interoperability](#) across various domains between the three countries. General Yoshihide Yoshida, Chief of Staff of the JSDF, met with his counterparts, General Charles Brown of the US and Admiral Kim Myung Soo of South Korea, marking the first Chief of Staff-level talks focused on shared challenges faced by the three nations.

During the meeting, the leaders agreed to bolster trilateral security cooperation to address threats from the Korean Peninsula and the broader Indo-Pacific region. They called on North Korea to "cease all destabilizing activities immediately" and condemned its alliance with Russia as a violation of international law. Regarding China, the leaders concurred that its "escalatory, dangerous, and aggressive behaviour supporting unlawful maritime claims" would not be tolerated. They also agreed to hold their next meeting in Seoul in 2025.

## **TAIWAN**

### **Taiwan's Annual Han Kuan Military Exercise and Recent Developments**

In the last week of July, Taiwan conducted its annual Han Kuan military exercise, a tradition that began forty years ago. This year's drill emphasized maintaining anti-landing operations in an "[unscripted](#)" manner, aiming to simulate conditions as closely as possible to [actual combat](#).

Recent reports indicate that the delivery of F-16 fighter jets to Taiwan by Lockheed Martin will be delayed until 2025.

According to a statement from the US Air Force, the delay is due to “[complex developmental challenges](#),” but the US government, Taiwan, and Lockheed Martin are actively working to address these issues.

Responding to the question of delay, the US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin [announced](#) that “stockpiled military equipment” valued at USD 500 million will be provided to Taiwan as a near-term solution. This support will be facilitated under the Presidential Drawdown Authority, authorized by the 2023 National Defense Authorization Act. Additionally, Taiwan has [secured](#) a USD 37.98 million deal with the US to maintain military aircraft weapon systems training simulators from this year through 2027.

Taiwanese media also [reported](#) that the frequent flights and maneuvers of the PLA’s unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) around Taiwan may serve dual purposes: familiarizing with flight paths in the Western Pacific and engaging in psychological warfare against Taiwan.

## THE KOREAN PENINSULA

### North Korea Tested Two Missiles

North Korea [tested two missiles](#) on the early morning of 1 July. The North Korean state media claimed that the country tested the Hwasong-11Da-4.5 missile which can carry a “4.5 ton-class [super-large warhead](#)”. The state media also informed that the country will hold [more tests](#) of this missile.

### South Korea’s Strengthening Military Capabilities

On 4 July, the South Korean Navy held a function to celebrate the [completion of delivery](#) of the six American manufactured P-8A Poseidon aircraft for maritime surveillance. Following the event, on 11 July, the US and South Korea signed an [agreement](#) on the "Guidelines for Nuclear Deterrence and Nuclear Operations on the Korean Peninsula," to integrate their nuclear and conventional forces, respectively. Also, South Korean and Indian Air Forces [conducted a joint military exercise](#) on 18 July at Darwin, Australia. Further, on 28 July, South Korea, Japan and the United States signed a [Trilateral Security Cooperation Framework](#) (TSCF) agreement to further strengthen security cooperation between them.