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CHINA

PLA Navy 76th Anniversary

On 23 April the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) marked its [76th anniversary](#). Reportedly, more than thirty naval vessels that are in active service were brought for public exhibition across ten coastal cities of China. According to China Central Television (CCTV) [report](#), the Type 071 amphibious transport dock *Yimengshan*, Type 052C guided missile destroyer *Xi'an*, Type 052D guided missile destroyer *Nanjing*, Type 056A guided missile corvette *Lu'an* and Type 054A guided missile frigate *Linyi*, among others were part of the exhibit. Notably, China's one of the biggest and most advanced [warship](#), Type 075 amphibious assault ship *Hainan* was also opened to public boarding. As per news reports, the *Hainan* is China's first indigenously designed "large-scale amphibious warfare vessel" and could play a key role in military crisis in the Taiwan Straits.

Joint Armed Exercise "Counter-Terrorism Deterrence-2025"

On 28 April, a joint armed exercise "Counter-terrorism Deterrence-2025" was [held](#) in Ili River Valley in Xinjiang. Ma Xingrui, Secretary of the Autonomous Region Party Committee, remotely observed the exercise and delivered a speech. Erkin Tuniyaz, Chairman of Xinjiang Autonomous Region, and He Zhongyou, Deputy Secretary of the Xinjiang Autonomous Region Party Committee, [participated](#) in the observation of the training. The exercise aimed at strengthening border defense. It was a large-scale joint armed exercise where

4,000 personnel from Xinjiang Military Region, Xinjiang People's Armed Police Force, Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps and other forces participated. The exercise involved use of drones, armoured vehicles, assault vehicles and other equipment. The team of 4000-personnel carried out drills simulating joint investigation of border area, border port prevention, border infiltration, illegal crossing of border etc. Reportedly, the drills were aimed to test the capabilities of various forces in emergency command, intelligence reconnaissance focused at cracking down on violent terrorist activities in Xinjiang. In his speech Ma Xingrui instructed that the armed forces must crack-down the 'three evil' – terrorism, extremism, and separatism. He urged that the armed forces must prevent the risk of imported terrorist attacks, strengthen border port management, and defend border security. Relevant leaders and officers of the Xinjiang Autonomous Region were also present.

JAPAN

Japan Raises New Transport Unit for Improved Logistics

On 6 April, Defence Minister Gen Nakatani [attended](#) a ceremony to mark the raising of a new unit that is intended to improve logistical capabilities in the Southwestern islands near the disputed Senkaku/Diaoyu islands. The unit, entitled the Maritime Transportation Group, is based out of the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Forces' Kure base, and was officially launched in March. Composed of over 100 members drawn from both the JMSDF and the Japan Ground Self-Defence Forces (JGSDF), the

unit will command and operate 10 transport ships by 2028, of which two are already in service. The unit's primary responsibility will be to ferry troops of the JGSDF's elite Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade, which is currently based out of Sasebo in Nagasaki Prefecture, to the southwestern islands (the Okinawa, Yaeyama and Ogasawara chain of islands) in the event of an emergency. At the launch ceremony, Nakatani heralded the improvement in the pace of troop deployment due to the unit. He praised the 'historical importance' of the two services, which are equivalent to the Army and Navy, working together to raise what is in effect a joint special command.

NATO Secretary-General Visits Japan

The Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), Mark Rutte, visited Japan from 8 April onwards and met both Defence Minister Gen Nakatani and Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba. Rutte and Nakatani [discussed](#) positions on various regional and international issues, including the potential role NATO may play in the Indo-Pacific. The Japanese side used the opportunity of the meeting to announce its intention to participate in the NATO-led Ukraine Security Assistance and Training Organisation (NSATU) in an unspecified capacity, while repeating its traditional emphasis on the indivisibility of Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific security. The two sides agreed to continue personnel exchange between them (started in 2014) and to promote deeper collaboration based on existing Japan-NATO cooperation documents. Later on the same day, Rutte [visited](#) the JMSDF's Yokosuka Base and

toured the JS *Mogami*, Japan's indigenously built frigate, followed by a visit to Mitsubishi Heavy Industries' Kamakura Works (MHI being the builder of the *Mogami*-class frigates).

During his meeting with Prime Minister Ishiba, who was accompanied by Minister of Foreign Affairs Takeshi Iwaya and Nakatani, Rutte [conveyed](#) a desire to strengthen Japan-NATO collaboration, including in the field of defence industry cooperation. The Japanese side emphasised the advantages of a strong NATO for Japan, and both sides agreed to deepen cooperation on cyber, maritime security, strategic communications and interoperability alongside greater emphasis on defence-industrial collaboration. Regional security threats were discussed, with commitments to seek greater jointness in their responses to such crises.

TAIWAN

China's Military Drills around Taiwan

On 1 April, People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China [carried out](#) "large-scale military drills around Taiwan," simulating "approaching Taiwan from 'multiple directions'." The Chinese coastguard also participated in it. It carried out "law-enforcement patrols" close to the mainland Taiwan. Recently, the Coast Guard, maritime militia, and civilian ships as military transport have been integrated in the PLA exercises around Taiwan. Taiwanese defence ministry [condemned](#) the exercise as "aggressive, provocative, and irresponsible," and assured that it conduct "immediate combat readiness exercises" based on enemy's threat, weather conditions, and other factors."

THE KOREAN PENINSULA

South Korea's Defence Exports

In April 2025, foreign envoys posted in South Korea [observed](#) the military equipment and weapon systems manufactured by South Korean companies. They visited the arms manufacturing facilities in South Korea, and examined the K2 tanks built by Hyundai Rotem and K9 howitzers built by Hanwha Aerospace. Reportedly, Norway expressed plans to [buy](#) twenty four K9 Thunder howitzers from Hanwha Aerospace. Also, Indian company Larsen and Toubro [signed](#) an agreement with Hanwha Aerospace in New Delhi to build one hundred more K9 Vajra howitzers. Defense companies from South Korea were also reported to be looking for [opportunities](#) for arms export to Germany and other European countries.

North Korea's New Weapon Systems

According to a report in April, the North Korean regime has been [developing](#) more advanced drone capabilities. It was speculated that North Korea probably received some help from Russia in developing large strategic drones. North Korea was also reported to be [building](#) its “largest domestically produced warship” at the Nampo Naval Shipyard. Later, it was reported that North Korea [launched](#) a naval ship which is a “5000-tonnage destroyer”. Also, the North Korean leader Kim Jong-un [inspected](#) the small-arms shooting contest organised by the (North) Korean People's Army.