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CHINA

Robot Wolves in PLA Exercise

In a first ever public demonstration ‘[robot wolves](#)’ were seen involved in a PLA exercise broadcast by the Chinese state media, China Central Television (CCTV) on 15 July. The ‘robot wolf’, a utility quadrupedal robot platform, was first unveiled at Airshow China 2024 held in Zhuhai, South China's Guangdong Province. The quadrupedal robot platform is capable of attack, reconnaissance, and transportation and support missions. Developed by state-owned China South Industries Group Corporation, the robot platform has high mobility and adaptability to complex terrain. Further it can [manage](#) high obstacles, operate alongside human soldiers in coordinated formations thus creating a network of vehicles, human operators and robot wolves. According to the CCTV footage, the [exercise](#) involved traditional infantry offensive tactics, integrating unmanned systems such as drones and ‘robot wolves’ to conduct combat operations including preliminary reconnaissance verification and precision strikes.

PLA Western Theatre Command Air Force Organised a Special Lecture

Towards the end of July, a special lecture was [held](#) in the academic hall of the People's Liberation Army (PLA)'s Western Theatre Command (WTC) Air Force Early Warning Academy. The lecture was delivered by Xue Hao, from WTC Air Force, sharing his experiences while serving at the frontier. Reportedly, the lecture aimed to encourage the military academy cadets to serve at the frontiers. Media reports suggest that, this year, the

Party Committee in the WTC is promoting activities including lectures to motivate more military academy cadets to serve in the frontier regions. A publicity team has been formed that incorporates experts from the Air Force Engineering University and the Air Force Early Warning Academy. The team is visiting military academies to brief about the PLA unit's activities in the border region, in training and combat readiness progress, to attract more cadets to serve in the frontier forces. So far, the team has visited five military academies.

JAPAN

JSDF Inaugurates New Base for Aviation Assets

Japan's Self-Defence Forces, in particular the Ground Self-Defence Forces (GSDF), [inaugurated](#) a new base on 9 July on mainland Japan's Kyushu island to house its problem-ridden V22 Osprey transport aircraft. The new GSDF Camp Saga, located in the prefecture of the same name, is expected to serve as a hub for servicing key military installations further south in order to boost response time vis-a-vis any future incursion by hostile forces. A key mission of the transport aircraft will be to ‘transport personnel and equipment for the GSDF's Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade [a unit also dubbed as the Japanese Marines] in the event of an emergency’. The base which has about 420 personnel, received its first V22 Osprey on the same day as its inauguration, with 16 more expected to be relocated from temporary stations further north by mid-August. However, the V22 Osprey's poor safety record invited small-scale protests from some local citizens after the inauguration.

Japan's MOD Participates in First AUKUS Pillar 2 Exercise

The Japanese Ministry of Defence [announced](#) on 23 July that it had participated in the first AUKUS Pillar 2 exercise involving forces from the United States (US) Australia and the United Kingdom (UK) under the banner of the AUKUS partnership during the Talisman Sabre '25 multinational exercise in Australia. The MOD informed that its participation was conducted under the AUKUS' Pillar 2 cooperation mechanism, which Japan has signed on to. As part of the exercise, 'maritime autonomous systems through underwater acoustic communications' were tested for efficacy in contingency situations and interoperability across force structures. The exercise was held off Jervis Bay, Australia.

TAIWAN

Military Drills in Taiwan

The ten day long 41st iteration of Taiwan's live fire Han Kuang military drills [concluded](#) on 18 July— the [longest](#) till date. Reported to be a record mobilisation the drill saw mobilisation of 22,000 reservists. The exercise [involved](#) over 100 "training scenarios." However, analysing the drills, experts [noted](#) that the drills revealed a lack of "preparation for a potential large-scale drone attack." It was contended that Taiwan need to be better prepared to fight low-flying drones. They suggested that the military need to deploy drones "more widely" and "formalise" "doctrines" for drone warfare. In a

separate development, Taiwan [received](#) the supply of a second tranche of 42 M1A2T Abrams main battle tanks (MBTs) from the US. Also, Taiwan is set to buy 108 M1A2T from 2019-2027 at a price of US\$1.38 billion. It had received 38 of these tanks in December 2024. This year, four of them participated in a live-fire drill under the Han Kuang military exercises. The tanks use Hunter-Killer targeting system. The army informed that they were satisfied with the performance of the tanks. Taiwan is likely to receive the rest of the tanks by mid-2026.

THE KOREAN PENINSULA

South Korea and OPCON

In July, it was reported that South Korea was [planning](#) to take back the wartime operational control (OPCON) of the South Korean army from the US. This issue has been one of the major security agenda of the Lee Jae Myung administration in South Korea. Since the Korean War, the OPCON has been under the American military command in South Korea. The proposal to transfer wartime OPCON to South Korea is happening in the backdrop of increasing pressure from Washington on Seoul to pay more for the cost of security provided by the US military presence in South Korea. However, the presidential office in South Korea [refuted](#) the assertion by Defense Minister Nominee, Ahn Gyu-back that Seoul will take back wartime OPCON within five-year tenure of the current Lee Jae Myung administration. Notably, the peacetime OPCON has been under the South Korean administration since 1994.

North Korea's Military Support to Russia

In July, the Foreign Minister of Russia, Sergei Lavrov visited North Korea and met with the North Korean leader Kim Jong-un. The North Korean leadership pledged for “[unconditional](#)” assistance to Moscow in the ongoing Ukraine war. The military relations between North Korea and Russia have strengthened since June last year, when the Russian President Vladimir Putin visited Pyongyang and signed a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with Kim Jong-un. Reportedly, North Korea sent thousands of troops and tonnes of weapons to Russia to fight against Ukraine. Sergei Lavrov also thanked North Korea for its support in retaking the Kursk region from the Ukrainian control. According to a news report in the South Korean media in July 2025, North Korea had [supplied](#) about twelve million rounds of 152 mm artillery shells and sent around 13,000 soldiers to Russia.