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CHINA

Tibet Military Region's Brigade Conducts Live-Fire Training

In mid-September, a brigade of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Tibet Military Region (TMR) conducted air force live-fire training exercises focusing on strengthening air defense along its border. Reportedly, a simulated exercise was organised in which fighter aircraft and helicopter formations attacked a designated enemy target, and the aircrafts evaded the missiles attacks by the enemy while penetrating towards the target. The exercise incorporated aerial reconnaissance, low-altitude penetration, and firepower drills to enhance the pilots' decision-making and precision strike capabilities. During the exercise, the troops used Type 625 anti-aircraft missile and gun system that has entered into the service in the PLA Tibet Military Region in 2021. The Type 625 integrated mobile weapon system is used for short-range air defense operations. The weapon system combines multiple rapid fire guns and short-range air defence missiles, featuring an integrated setup of air search radar, fire control radar, and electro-optical tracking systems on a single vehicle.

PLA Western Theatre Command Conducts Land-Air Combined Exercise

In late September, an air defence unit from a brigade of the PLA Western Theatre Command (WTC) conducted a land-air combined counter-attack exercise in a high-altitude area. The unit simulated a drill in which the PLA air defence units were mobilised to defend and shoot down the

approaching enemy aircrafts. The exercise was being operated from the command centre, and various difficult situations were created. The air defence units made use of air situation sharing, alternating radar operation, and coordinated strikes. The exercise was aimed at improving the air defence unit's ability to respond quickly, accurately, and comprehensively in near-real-life combat situations. During the exercise, the air force and air defence units engaged in simulated combat to enable the troops to enhance their understanding of integrated operations and their combat skills under complex and dynamic scenarios.

JAPAN

Japan-US-ROK Joint Exercises Freedom Edge 25 Held

The naval and air arms of the Japanese Self-Defence Forces (JSDF) joined their American and South Korean counterparts in holding the latest edition of the trilateral joint exercise Freedom Edge 25 from 15 to 19 September 2025. Reportedly, the exercises, held off South Korea's Jeju Island, were aimed to strengthen the interoperability between the three countries' militaries in the sea, air and cyberspace, necessary to counter North Korea's growing nuclear and missile threats', according to Seoul's Defence Ministry. The United States Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) informed reporters that the exercise included both Marine Corps and Air Force elements in the exercises, comprising of ballistic-missile and air-defence drills, medical evacuation training and maritime operations training. Cyber-

warfare and special operations capabilities were also part of the exercise. The JSDF dispatched two helicopter destroyers, the JS *Hyuga* (DDH-181) and the JS *Haguro* (DDG-180) to the exercise, along with relevant air assets. The exercise attracted swift condemnation from North Korea, but also saw protests within South Korea against it.

Japanese F-15s Participate in Atlantic Eagles Outreach

F-15 fighter aircraft operated by the Japanese Air Self-Defence Forces (JASDF) visited the United States, Canada, Britain and Germany for ‘defence exchanges’ with their respective air arms throughout September. The platforms, accompanied by transport and refuelling platforms were engaging in the Atlantic Eagles outreach program to enhance cooperation between key European allies. This is the first time Japan has participated, and the first time it has deployed fighter aircraft so far from the home islands. The move is widely understood as reflecting Japan’s desire to boost cooperation with European partners such as France, Germany and Britain, in line with its understanding that Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific security is closely interrelated. Initial plans for the visit included joint exercises between the Japanese visitors and their hosts. These were later scrapped in favour of ‘unit-to-unit’ exchanges.

TAIWAN

Increase in Taiwan’s Defence Budget

The media reported that Taiwan’s Ministry of National Defense in order to upgrade

Taiwan’s defence preparedness “against a potential Chinese attack.” may seek a special budget, which is likely to be between USD 26.4 billion and USD 33.1 billion. The budget will be spent “over seven years.” The final budgetary estimate will be determined after taking into account some potential arms purchase from the US, which are under negotiation. The upgrading of defence preparedness covers integration of air defense systems, more advanced counter small drone technology, rockets and missiles, rapid response capabilities, and ammunition production and storing capabilities. In a separate event, Air Force Colonel Chang Ming-che was found guilty of spying for China. The court sentenced him to 16 years in prison. He has the right to appeal to a higher court.

THE KOREAN PENINSULA

Military Drills by South Korea

In September 2025, South Korea conducted several military drills in collaboration with the US and Japan. The United States and South Korean military conducted a “tabletop exercise” in the Gyeonggi Province of South Korea. This tabletop military drill is also called Iron Mace exercise and it is a part of the strategy to integrate the conventional forces of Seoul with that of the American nuclear capabilities. Reportedly, this was aimed to deter North Korean nuclear and missile threats and it is the first such exercise under the new Lee Jae Myung administration in South Korea. Also, the US and South Korea held “medical evacuation” drills in September to prepare for any incident of mass causality. This exercise tested the

interoperability of the medical teams from South Korea and the US.

North Korea's Unmanned Aeronautical Technology

In September 2025, it was reported in the North Korean state media that the country has achieved significant breakthrough in the development of Unmanned Aeronautical Technology. The North Korean leader Kim Jong-un witnessed the performance test of these unmanned weapon systems being developed by the Unmanned Aeronautical Technology Complex in North Korea. Reportedly, Pyongyang has been developing several kinds of drone technology for surveillance and military purposes. Kim Jong-un stressed the need for the development of more sophisticated unmanned aeronautical capabilities and artificial intelligence to meet the challenges of the modern warfare. According to another report, Kim Jong-un also inspected the research on composite carbon fiber material by the General Academy of Chemical Materials under the Missile Administration of North Korea which is developing “high-thrust solid-fuel engine”. Reportedly, these new engines would be used in the North Korean intercontinental ballistic missiles.