



Japan Deploys Warplanes to Track Chinese Fighters Near Taiwan, China Tests New Coilgun

On August 25, Japan dispatched warplanes to monitor Chinese bombers and drones off Okinawa and Taiwan, according to Kyodo News reports quoting the Japanese Ministry of Defense (MoD), amid rising Sino-Japanese tensions.

The defense ministry stated that they had spotted two Chinese H-6 bombers flying through the strait between Okinawa and Miyako islands. Okinawa is home to Kadena Air Base, the largest U.S. military site in the Asia-Pacific.

The Japanese military also revealed that its aircraft were mobilized to track a Chinese BZK-005 reconnaissance drone and another “likely Chinese” drone flying between Japan’s westernmost Yonaguni island and Taiwan.

Also, Taiwan’s Defense Ministry reported on the morning of August 26 that 32 Chinese military aircraft and nine warships were detected around the island. The ministry elaborated that 20 planes, including eight J-10 and two Su-30 fighters, had crossed the median line of the Taiwan Strait or entered the island’s air defense identification zone.

The Taiwanese defense ministry said that they had activated Taiwan’s own aircraft, ships, and land-based missile systems to closely track the situation.

Such reports of the Chinese military’s recent maneuvers come in light of economic and military hostilities between Beijing on one side, and Tokyo and Taipei on the other. Recently, mainland China prohibited imports of mangoes from Taiwan, using food safety issues as a pretext.

Simultaneously, Beijing declared a complete ban on Japanese seafood in retaliation to Tokyo’s move to dump wastewater from the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant, the location of the 2011 disaster, into the Pacific Ocean.

Besides, China has also been cautioning Taipei about “collusion” with the United States. Beijing, which regards Taiwan as its own territory to be taken back by force if necessary, objects to the Taiwanese government’s diplomatic activities with foreign countries as well as the sale of American arms to Taiwan.

On August 23, the U.S. State Department authorized the sale of infrared search and track systems and other equipment worth \$500 million for U.S.-made F-16 jet fighters to Taiwan. Based on a statement from the U.S. Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), the package entails spare parts, software, “aircraft and munitions support,” as well as training equipment. Taiwan also asked for “US government and contractor engineering, technical, and logistics support services,” the agency continued.



Alert5/Wikimedia Commons
Chinese J-10 fighter



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“The proposed sale will help improve the security of the recipient and assist in maintaining political stability, military balance, and economic progress in the region,” the DSCA declared.

China conducted large-scale military drills around Taiwan previously this month, after pro-independence Taiwanese Vice President Lai Ching-te visited the United States. Beijing did the same in 2022, after the then-U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s Taiwan visit.

In response to rising cross-strait tensions between China and Taiwan, Terry Gou, the billionaire founder of key Apple supplier Foxconn, declared on August 28 that he was entering Taiwan’s presidential race as an independent candidate for the 2024 elections.

While Gou stepped down as Foxconn’s chief in 2019 and made a presidential bid that year, he pulled out after losing the nomination for Taiwan’s main opposition party, Kuomintang (KMT), which traditionally prefers closer ties with China. Earlier in 2023, Gou made a second attempt to be KMT’s candidate for the presidential election, but the party instead selected New Taipei City Mayor Hou Yu-ih.

“Under the rule of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) in the past seven years or so, internationally, they led Taiwan towards the danger of war. Domestically, their policies are filled with mistakes,” Gou declared, stating that “the era of (the) entrepreneur’s rule” has begun.

“Give me four years and I promise that I will bring 50 years of peace to the Taiwan Strait and build the deepest foundation for ... mutual trust across the strait,” he told Taiwanese voters. “Taiwan must not become Ukraine, and I will not let Taiwan become the next Ukraine,” he said.

When questioned about any conflict of interest, as he is a major shareholder of Foxconn, which has huge investments in China, Gou replied that he was prepared to “sacrifice” his personal assets in China should China attack Taiwan.

“I have never been under the control of the People’s Republic of China,” he said. “I don’t follow their instructions.”

Meanwhile, Beijing is conducting an experiment on the world’s largest [coilgun](#) that can accelerate a projectile weighing more than 100 kilograms (220 pounds) to a speed of 700 kilometers per hour (435 miles per hour) in less than 0.05 seconds, according to Chinese media reports on August 25.

The coilgun, or magnetic accelerator, is bedecked with a number of coils installed along its barrel to create a magnetic field capable of propelling projectiles. The 124-kilogram projectile is touted to be the heaviest ever used in such a test.

A team of scientists from the Chinese navy are conducting the experiment. Although the scientists have not revealed the precise features of the coilgun nor when it will be mobilized in operation, they have said that a projectile fired by such a gun can hit a target at a distance of several kilometers.

Additionally, the projectile is allegedly equipped with sensors protected from electromagnetic radiation, permitting the operator to gather details about its flight.

“It [the coilgun] has the potential for revolutionary breakthroughs in terms of speed, range, power, accuracy, safety, flexibility and reliability,” Professor Guan Xiaocun, the leader of the scientific team, was quoted as stating,.

Furthermore, Guan also divulged that the coilgun would aid the Chinese military to alter the nature of combat as it would ramp up the speed and accuracy of the projectile along with the reliability and safety of the shot. Besides, the scientist posited that the insights gained in testing the gun could also be



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used in launching near-Earth satellites and high-speed rockets. The United States conducted similar tests at the Sandia National Laboratories in the 2000s where a 120mm electromagnetic coil mortar reportedly fired a projectile weighing 18 kilograms.

Meanwhile, China and Singapore are poised to conduct joint military drills from late August to mid-September to enhance military cooperation, the Chinese Defense Ministry announced on August 28.

“In accordance with the annual plan and the bilateral agreement, the China-Singapore joint ground forces exercise Cooperation 2023 will be held in Singapore from late August to mid-September,” the ministry declared on Chinese messaging app WeChat.

During the exercise, both countries would train on sniper fire and melee combat techniques, as well as hostage-rescue operations.

The drills are meant to bolster practical cooperation between the Chinese and Singaporean militaries, as well as to raise the level of real combat training of the troops, the ministry continued.



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