



China's military drills China / Military

PLA offers back-to-back drill updates as Taiwan's Han Kuang exercise ramps up

Round-the-clock joint military exercises appear to be direct response to island's expanded annual war games

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The People's Liberation Army (PLA) has stepped up messaging about its round-the-clock military drills conducted in an apparent response to [Taiwan's annual Han Kuang exercise](#).

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For four consecutive days this week, the PLA's [Eastern Theatre Command](#) – the division responsible for overseeing the Taiwan Strait and the [East China Sea](#) – has given daily updates on cross-service military drills that appear to correspond to the exercises in Taiwan.

Taiwan's 10-day Han Kuang exercise, which began on July 9 and wraps up on Friday, is the largest and longest in its 41-year history.



A PLA KJ-500 early-warning aircraft crossed the median line in the Taiwan Strait on Monday, according to the island's defence ministry. Photo: 81.com

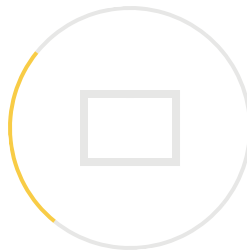
The details of the PLA drills were released in a way that suggests they involved coordination of various forces in the command and operations during both daytime and night activities.

The exact dates of these exercises were not specified, with the PLA claiming only that they had taken place “in recent days”, but the timing of the releases matched the drills in Taiwan. The activities monitored by Taipei suggested ramped-up pressure from the PLA at around the same time.

On Monday, the Eastern Theatre Command said its naval aviation wing had conducted nighttime flight training to “further hammer the pilots’ technical and tactical levels”, according to a social media post. Warplane pilots reportedly used stars for navigation and simulated dogfights in complex manoeuvres.

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On Tuesday, Taiwan's defence ministry said that in the 24 hours until 6am that morning, 21 out of 26 PLA aircraft sorties – including [J-16 fighter jets](#) and a KJ-500 early-warning aircraft – crossed the Taiwan Strait's unofficial [median line](#) and entered the island's self-declared [air defence identification zone](#) (ADIZ) to the north, southwest and east.

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