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China Concludes Military Exercises Encircling Taiwan

Drills were successful in testing joint operations ‘under actual combat conditions,’ China says

By *Joyu Wang* [Follow](#)

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TAIPEI—China’s military wrapped up three days of exercises around Taiwan, including a swarm of jet fighters launched from one of its aircraft carriers, saying it gained experience coordinating its different forces as it encircled the self-ruled island.

The Eastern Theater Command of the People’s Liberation Army, which oversees forces positioned closest to Taiwan, issued a statement on Monday announcing the end of the exercises, which were launched after Taiwan’s president returned from a visit to the U.S. that Beijing had loudly opposed.

That statement proclaimed the exercises a success, saying they tested joint combat capabilities involving multiple services “under actual combat conditions.”

Separately on Monday, China Central Television released video footage of Chinese bombers and jet fighters ostensibly conducting simulated strikes on key targets in Taiwan. The state broadcaster said exercises were intended to practice establishing an aerial blockade of the island, which Beijing claims as part of China.

China is set to continue a separate series of live-fire drills in coastal areas near Taiwan over the next two weeks.

The show of force is part of Beijing’s response to a two-stop U.S. visit by Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen, which included a meeting in California last week with House Speaker Kevin McCarthy (R., Calif.) that marked the highest-level political meeting that a Taiwanese leader has held while on U.S. soil. Beijing, which opposes any diplomatic engagement with Taiwan, warned that it would

retaliate if such a meeting were to occur.

A Chinese Coast Guard ship sails toward the zone where Beijing said it would conduct military exercises.

PHOTO: GREG BAKER/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE/GETTY IMAGES

When Mr. McCarthy's predecessor as House speaker, Nancy Pelosi (D., Calif.), visited Taiwan last summer, Beijing responded by launching missiles over the island and simulating a blockade. The Chinese military response this time was less dramatic, but still robust.

As of 6 p.m. Monday local time, Taiwan's Defense Ministry reported 12 warships and 91 Chinese warplanes near the island, including nuclear-capable H-6 bombers and J-15 jet fighters carried by the Shandong, China's second aircraft carrier, which the Taiwanese military said was involved in a training mission in the western Pacific Ocean.

The Taiwanese military will continue to pay close attention and gather intelligence on the movement of the PLA's rocket army, its long-range artillery force and the Shandong carrier even as the Chinese ended the three-day drills, Taiwan's Defense Ministry said late Monday.

Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force tracked the Shandong as it sailed south of

the island of Miyako, observing 80 takeoffs and landings by jet fighters and 40 by helicopters between April 7 and April 9, Japan's Defense Ministry said on Monday.

Issuing its "strongest condemnation," Taiwan's Foreign Ministry on Monday accused Beijing of challenging the international order by using Ms. Tsai's international tour as a pretext to conduct military drills that undermined regional security.

"We solemnly demand that China act rationally with self control, and stop coercing the people of Taiwan and change the status quo in the Taiwan Strait," the ministry said, referring to the 100-mile-wide body of water that separates China from Taiwan.

Peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait and an independent Taiwan are "incompatible as fire and water," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said at a regular news briefing on Monday. The military drills are "serious warning against the collusion and provocation of Taiwan independence separatist forces and external forces," he said.

Responding to what it called a serious threat to regional safety posed by the Chinese military, the Taiwan Navy on Monday conducted a war preparation drill in Kaohsiung, deploying its Hsiung Feng antiship missiles along with several missile boats off the southern coast of Taiwan, according to the island's Defense Ministry.

Japan's Defense Ministry said it sent two ships to gather information and monitor Chinese forces and scrambled military aircraft in an emergency response to the takeoffs and landings from the Chinese aircraft carrier.

Nearby in the South China Sea, most of which China also claims as its territory, the U.S. Navy sent a guided-missile destroyer, the USS Milius, sailing near Mischief Reef, a fortified Chinese island in the disputed Spratly archipelago, the U.S. Seventh Fleet said in a written statement on Monday. The operation was intended to assert navigational rights in the region and challenge excessive maritime claims, the statement said, without directly mentioning China.

A restaurant in Beijing displayed a giant screen showing news of the drills.

PHOTO: TINGSHU WANG/REUTERS

—*Peter Landers contributed to this article.*

Write to Joyu Wang at joyu.wang@wsj.com

Corrections & Amplifications

The Shandong is China's first domestically built aircraft carrier and second aircraft carrier overall. An earlier version of this article incorrectly said it was China's second domestically built carrier. (Corrected on April 10)