

## Chinese military

# China military parade to show off hypersonic missiles and autonomous weapons

Event will be closely watched for PLA's ability to target US forces in Pacific and attack Taiwan



Observers are closely watching China's military parades for signs of the People's Liberation Army's increasing capabilities © Johannes Neudecker/dpa

**Kathrin Hille** in Taipei

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China will show off a range of new hypersonic missiles and uncrewed weapons at a huge military parade early next month, highlighting the People's Liberation Army's increasing capabilities for targeting US naval forces in the Pacific and waging war on Taiwan.

The parade on September 3 will include the “debut of hypersonic, anti-missile defence and strategic missiles to exhibit our strong strategic deterrence capabilities”, Major General Wu Zeke, deputy director of the operations bureau of the Joint Staff Department of the Central Military Commission, said at a press conference in Beijing on Wednesday.

Wu added that the parade would also feature new tanks, autonomous vehicles for ground, naval and air use and electronic warfare equipment such as directed energy weapons and electronic jamming systems.

[China](#) generally holds military parades around anniversaries of the 1949 founding of the People's Republic, the last taking place in 2019.

Beijing planned this year's event, which will be reviewed by Chinese leader Xi Jinping and is also expected to be attended by Russian President Vladimir Putin, to mark the 80th anniversary of Japan's defeat in the second world war.

The government has said that the demonstration is aimed at promoting a "correct history view" about the war, and to "safeguard the post-WW international order" and promote "fair" international relations.

But the parade is being closely watched for signs of the increasing strength of the People's Liberation Army, which in recent years has expanded exercises that simulate [blockading and attacking Taiwan](#) and denied US forces' ability to operate in the region.

The PLA said on Wednesday that the parade would include more than 10,000 personnel, 100 aircraft and several hundred ground vehicles.



Pictures posted on Chinese social media of rehearsals for the parade appeared to show new models of anti-ship supersonic and hypersonic missiles © Weibo

Pictures of parade rehearsals posted on Chinese social media accounts show missiles

Pictures of parade rehearsals posted on Chinese social media accounts show missiles with the inscriptions YJ-15, YJ-17, YJ-19 and YJ-20.

Analysts said these indicated the development of four new models of anti-ship supersonic and [hypersonic](#) missiles, which could strengthen the PLA's arsenal of so-called anti-access area denial weapons.

The PLA has had the YJ-12, a supersonic anti-ship cruise missile, for more than a decade. Chinese officials have also previously commented on a YJ-21, described as a solid-fuel hypersonic anti-ship missile intended for targeting large naval targets such as aircraft carriers.

According to military experts, the YJ-15 resembles the YJ-12, but nozzles suggest it could have a ramjet engine, a mechanism that uses the missile's own movement to compress and combust sucked-in air, reducing the missile's weight and allowing it to travel further.

Other military analysts identified the YJ-17 and the YJ-20 as [hypersonic glide vehicles](#), the latter likely designed to launch from a ship. HGVs can manoeuvre in high-speed flight after separating from their launch rocket to avoid anti-missile defences.

The YJ-19 is believed to be a hypersonic ramjet missile.

Chinese social media accounts also posted pictures of a large combat drone and a device analysts believe is a drone ship.

Taiwanese analysts highlighted sightings during the rehearsals of tanks with uncrewed turrets and so-called active protection systems. Such weapons, including gear for autonomous control and targeting, are designed to protect against anti-tank weapons, such as [the Javelin missile](#) that has helped Ukraine's military counter Russia's invasion force.

"This is not good news for Taiwan," said Sheu Jyh-Shyang, an assistant research fellow at the Institute for National Defense and Security Research, a think-tank

backed by Taiwan's defence ministry.

Taiwan's military is increasingly focused on [planning to counter](#) a potential Chinese attack with asymmetric means, meaning with cheap, mobile weapons that can hit Chinese ships or tanks where they are vulnerable.

"If PLA ground forces are equipped with uncrewed turrets and APS on a large scale, that creates a tough problem for our strategy of purchasing large amounts of anti-tank weapons for asymmetric warfare," Sheu said.

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