



MANOHAR PARRIKAR INSTITUTE FOR
DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES

मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

CHINA MILITARY DIGEST

AUGUST 2024

- **U.S. Destroyer USS Ralph Johnson sailed through the Taiwan Strait**
- **31st Meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation & Coordination on India-China Border Affairs concluded**
- **Chinese PLA conducts military exercise near Myanmar border**
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U.S. destroyer USS Ralph Johnson sailed through the Taiwan Strait

The U.S. Destroyer USS Ralph Johnson (DDG-114) sailed through the Taiwan Strait on August 22, and the warship was supported from the south by a U.S. Air Force [RC-135W](#) reconnaissance aircraft that took off from Kadena Air Base on Japan's Okinawa Island. On the same day, Li Xi (李熹), Chinese military spokesperson said that the PLA Eastern Theatre Command deployed naval and air forces to monitor the USS [Ralph Johnson](#) throughout its passage through the Taiwan Strait. Japan-based [U.S. 7th Fleet](#) issued a statement in response to the Chinese spokesperson's statement on August 22, and it said "The ship transited through a corridor in the Strait is beyond the territorial sea of any coastal state. Ralph Johnson's transit through the Taiwan Strait demonstrates the United States' commitment to upholding freedom of navigation for all nations as a principle. No member of the international community should be intimidated or coerced into giving up their rights and freedoms." Meanwhile, [Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense](#) confirmed that the warship sailed south to north, and that "no anomaly was detected in our surroundings." The U.S. warship periodically sails through the [110-mile-wide](#) channel of Taiwan Strait and China often criticized those transits and usually monitors them. It was the US Navy's first transit of the waterway in months and the fourth this year. In late July, Royal Canadian Navy Halifax-class frigate HMCS Montreal (FFH-336) performed a strait transit, and early this year, destroyer USS John Finn (DDH-113) conducted two transits through the Taiwan Strait. On August 21, as day before its transit in the Taiwan Strait, the US destroyer Ralph Johnson operated near the Miyako Strait and Luzon Strait, and it implies that the warship

likely made a clockwise circumnavigation sailing around Taiwan.

31st Meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation & Coordination on India-China Border Affairs Concludes

The 31st meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation & Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC) was co-chaired by Gourangalal Das, Joint Secretary of the East Asia Division of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, and Hong Liang, Director-General of the Department of Boundary and Ocean Affairs of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 29 August 2024 in Beijing. Delegations of sixteen members from each side participated in the WMCC Meeting. The Indian [Ministry of External Affairs](#) press released on the meeting said: Firstly, in line with the guidance provided by two Foreign Ministers' meetings in Astana and Vientiane in July 2024 to accelerate their discussion, and building on the WMCC meeting held last month, the two sides had a frank, constructive and forward-looking exchanges and find early resolution of the outstanding issues. For this, they further agreed for intensified contact through diplomatic and military channels. Secondly, in the meantime, they decided to jointly uphold peace and tranquility on the ground in border areas in accordance with relevant bilateral agreements, protocols and understandings reached between the two Governments. It was reiterated that restoration of peace and tranquility, and respect for LAC are the essential basis for restoration of normalcy in bilateral relations. Thirdly, the leader of the Indian delegation also called on the Vice Minister in the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. According to the Chinese [Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#) press release, the two sides agreed to work together to turn the

page on the border situation at an early date in accordance with the guiding principles of the important common understandings reached between the two foreign ministers recently. Secondly, the two sides had an in-depth exchange of views on relevant issues in the border areas, further narrowed differences and expanded consensus, agreed to strengthen dialogue and consultation, accommodate each other's legitimate concerns and reach a mutually acceptable solution at an early date. Thirdly, the two sides agreed to consolidate the outcomes of consultations, strictly abide by border-related agreements and confidence-building measures, and continue to jointly safeguard peace and tranquility in the border areas.

Chinese PLA conducts military exercise near Myanmar border

The PLA concludes three-day military exercises involving army and air force on the Chinese side of Sino-[Myanmar](#) border on August 27. This exercise was organized following the bilateral talks on “stability of the border regions” between Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and junta Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing in Myanmar's capital Naypyidaw on August 14. Major fighting have opened in northern [Kachin](#) and Shan states in Myanmar, with artillery shells injuring people and damaging property on the Chinese side, and also threatening infrastructure projects in China. This live-fire drill subjects include testing of firepower abilities. These exercises are to be conducted in areas located south of Ruili, and in other areas around Zhenkang county and Gengma Dai and Va autonomous county in west Yunnan province of China. In April this year, the PLA conducted two training exercises when security concerns started to grow over the situation in Myanmar's northern Shan state, which borders China. In

the same month, Chinese government mouthpiece *PLA Daily* stated that China will take “all necessary measures” to ensure the safety of its people. Last October, after the Three Brotherhood Alliance, an alliance of ethnic armies, launched Operation 1027 against the junta in Shan state, the Chinese responded by carrying out three rounds of military exercises along the border. The northern Shan State of Myanmar shares border with China's [Yunnan](#) has been the site of repeated clashes since late June after the ethnic rebel groups renewed an offensive against the Myanmar's military along a vital trade highway to China. Shan State is a vital piece of land for Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative. Currently, nearly all towns in northern Shan State and the junta's Northeastern Regional Military Command in Lashio Town are under the control of the Three Brotherhood Alliance.

China-Thailand "Eagle Strike-2024" joint air force training concluded

The China-Thailand “[Eagle Strike – 2024](#)” joint air force training was conducted at the Udon Royal Thai Air Force Base (Udon RTAFB) from August 18 to 29. Chinese [Ministry of National Defense](#) declared on August 14 that China will send multiple types of aircraft and special operations forces to Thailand for the training. Training courses included early warning detection, confrontation with different types of aircraft, close air support, and combat injury rescue. This joint training aims to improve the [technical and tactical level](#) of the participating troops. China's [J-10s fighters](#) and [JH-7A “Flying Leopard”](#) fighter-bomber participated in the training. The JH-7A bomber was equipped electronic warfare pods to enhance the battlefield survivability of the JH-7A in modern high-intensity air combat. The Thai Air Force fighter jet

‘Gripen’, which is Sweden-made, is equipped with AIM-120-C5 air-to-air missile imported from the U.S., and the Taiwan military’s F-16V fighter also uses this missile model. China’s “[Y-9GL](#)” long-range jamming electronic warfare aircraft entered PLA service in 2022 also participated in the exercise. In addition to the “Y-9LG”, China also sent 13 aircraft including the J-11B (歼-11B) 3rd generation all-weather fighter jet, Shaanxi KJ-500 3rd generation airborne early warning and control (AEW&C) aircraft, J-10C a multipurpose fighter and PL-15 air-to-air missiles, J-7A maritime strike aircraft and tactical helicopters to participate in the exercise. This is the first time that China has sent special operations forces for the “Eagle Strike” series of air force training. [Vasily Kashin](#), Director of the Center for Comprehensive European and International Studies at the Higher School of Economics in Russia and a military analyst, pointed out: According to China’s past practice, the airborne troops are part of the air force, and it is logical to send airborne special force to participate in the exercise. China is forming a large airborne force equipped with a variety of heavy weapons, airborne combat vehicles and powerful special artillery, which is somewhat reminiscent of the Russian military. This powerful unit of the PLA can conduct mechanized warfare. Also, China is using the exercises with Thailand to study foreign military equipment and tactics of foreign troops because Thailand cooperates closely with the United States and holds exercises every year. Also, Thailand has a large number of modern Western equipment, so China attaches great importance to joint exercises with the country. He stressed that the joint exercise is a way to show China’s efforts to ensure

regional security and increasing its influence in the region.

Over 150 PLA's remote border, coastal defense locations integrated into national logistics system

According to the [Transportation and Delivery Bureau](#) of the Logistics Support Department under the Central Military Commission (CMC) in early August 2024, more than 150 remote border and coastal defense locations of the PLA have opened postal routes and been integrated into the national logistics system, bringing highly efficient and convenient modern logistics to the PLA border troops. In recent years, related divisions under the CMC Logistics Support Department have actively cooperated with China’s State Post Bureau and China Post Group Co., Ltd, to jointly launch the postal service support for the border and coastal defense troop stations, including letters, journals, parcels, express delivery and many other services. In addition, the [Postal Group](#) has also tried to introduce drones, the Internet of Things, and smart express lockers to improve the efficiency and quality of postal services; explore the opening of special mailboxes, provide delivery services during the specific time periods, and try to establish mobile post offices, etc., to meet the specific postal needs of border and coastal defense soldiers and civilians. The State Post Bureau issued the “Guiding Opinions on the Layout and Construction of National Postal Express Hubs”, which will be deployed in the country. The new layout will have about [80 national postal express hubs](#), including about 15 global international postal express hubs, about 20 regional international postal express hubs, and about 45 national postal express hubs. Each hub can be constructed according to local conditions.