

# FACT SHEET |

## 2022 CHINA MILITARY POWER REPORT



U.S. Department of Defense

Today, the Department of Defense transmitted its annual report on the “Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China (PRC)” to Congress, referred to as the China Military Power Report. This report illustrates how the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has frequently turned to the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) in support of its global ambitions, and provides an assessment of PLA capabilities that underscores why the PRC represents the Department’s pacing challenge.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ▶ *Expanding PRC National Power to Transform International System:* The PRC increasingly views the United States as deploying a whole-of-government effort meant to contain the PRC’s rise, which presents obstacles to its national strategy. The PRC’s strategy aims to achieve “the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation” by 2049 in a determined pursuit to amass its national power to transform an international system more favorable to the PRC’s political governance system and national interests.
- ▶ *Increasing PRC Military Coercion:* Over the course of 2021, and as seen in 2022, the CCP has increasingly turned to the PLA as an instrument of statecraft in support of its national strategy and global ambitions. The report highlights that the PLA has adopted more dangerous, coercive, and aggressive actions in the Indo-Pacific region.
- ▶ *Strengthening PLA Nuclear, Space, and Counterspace Capabilities:* The PRC has clearly stated its ambition to strengthen its “strategic deterrent,” and has continued to accelerate the modernization, diversification, and expansion of its nuclear forces, as well as the development of its space and counterspace capabilities.
- ▶ *Intensifying Diplomatic, Economic, Political, and Military Pressure against Taiwan:* The PLA will likely continue to increase military pressure—in concert with diplomatic, information, and economic pressure—in an attempt to compel Taiwan toward unification.

### LOOKING AHEAD: MILITARY AND SECURITY IMPLICATIONS OF THE 20TH NATIONAL CONGRESS OF THE CCP

The PRC’s 20th National Congress of the CCP holds important military and security implications for the PLA’s 2027 centenary objectives. General Secretary Xi Jinping’s report to the 20th Party Congress focused on intensifying and accelerating the PLA’s modernization goals over the next five years, including strengthening its “system of strategic deterrence.” Xi retained his chairmanship of the seven-person Central Military Commission, which includes members that offer political continuity, technical expertise on military modernization and space issues, as well as Taiwan-focused operational experience.

## DEVELOPING PLA MILITARY STRATEGY

- The report offers analysis of the PLA’s way of war and assesses its future military modernization goals. The PLA is setting its sights to 2027, looking to develop the capabilities to be a more credible military tool for the CCP to wield as it pursues Taiwan unification.
- In 2021, the PLA began discussing a new core operational concept called “Multi-Domain Precision Warfare,” intended to leverage its command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C4ISR) network to rapidly identify key vulnerabilities in an adversary’s operational system and launch precision strikes against those vulnerabilities.

## INCREASING COERCION IN THE TAIWAN STRAIT

- The PRC conducting persistent military operations near Taiwan—and training for a Taiwan contingency—likely signals a greater urgency for the PLA to improve its planning and capabilities as PRC leaders look for military options to achieve their objectives.
- Throughout 2021, and into 2022, the PLA increased provocative and destabilizing actions in and around the Taiwan Strait, to include increased flights into Taiwan’s claimed air defense identification zone and conducting exercises focused on the potential seizure of one of Taiwan’s outlying islands.

## INCREASING UNSAFE AND UNPROFESSIONAL PLA OPERATIONAL BEHAVIOR

- Throughout 2021 and into 2022, PLA naval vessels and aircraft have exhibited a sharp increase in unsafe and unprofessional behavior in the Indo-Pacific region, including lasing, aerobatics, discharging objects, and activity that impinge upon the ability of nearby aircraft to maneuver safely.
- Unsafe and unprofessional behavior appears to target U.S. military aircrafts and naval vessels, as well as those of our key allies and partners.

## STRENGTHENING PRC “STRATEGIC DETERRENT” CAPABILITIES

- In 2021, the PRC probably accelerated its nuclear expansion. DOD estimates China’s operational nuclear warhead stockpile has surpassed 400 warheads, on track to exceed previous projections.
- By 2035, the PLA plans to “basically complete modernization” of its national defense and armed forces. If China continues the pace of its nuclear expansion, it could likely field a stockpile of about 1500 warheads by that time.