



By: TA | AP Brief

Taiwan kicks off military drills to counter a potential Chinese attack



Taiwan kicked off annual military exercises Wednesday aimed at simulating a response to a potential Chinese invasion of the self-governed island Beijing claims as its own.

The live-fire exercises will test the Taiwanese army's ability to sustain 24-hour defense operations as well as counter China's "gray-zone tactics," which stop just short of open warfare.

Urban resilience drills will test the population's response to a disruption in internet service.

The 10-day Han Kuang exercises are set to be held in various locations around the island.

This year's drills will test new, U.S.-inspired communication methods including backbriefs – where subordinates explain to commanders how they plan to carry out assigned missions.

The communication drills are intended to encourage first-line fighters to be more self-reliant and effective in battle, experts say.

Another focus of this year's drills is that they will mobilize the largest ever team of reservists, more than 5,000 service members across two brigades.

Last year's drills involved one brigade of more than 3,000 reservists.

The drills will test how quickly reserves can mobilize from peacetime standby mode to full active duty.

Another focus of the exercises, reflecting Taiwan's longstanding emphasis on **civil defense**, are urban resilience drills.

These will take place on different days in the major cities of Kaohsiung, Taichung and the capital, Taipei.

During the drills, mobile internet speed will be reduced for about 30 minutes to simulate telecommunications interference in case of an attack.

Military equipment being tested will feature

the newly acquired M1A2T Abrams tanks. Taiwan procured 108 of the American-made tanks in 2019, the last batch of which arrived in April.

Military pressure

Taiwan sources most of its weapons from the United States, which is the island's main informal backer in the face of **territorial claims** from China.

Beijing regards democratic Taiwan as a breakaway province, to be retaken by force if necessary.

In recent years, it has ramped up a campaign of military pressure, which has involved sending military aircraft and warships near the island almost daily.

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Taiwan's parliament recently approved a \$24.8 billion supplementary budget bill for the purchase of U.S. arms, which fell short of Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te's proposal for a **\$40 billion budget**.

The island's government is waiting on the U.S. to greenlight a \$14 billion arms sale package to Taiwan, which has been held up for months.

U.S. President Donald Trump and the U.S. Congress earlier approved a separate, record-breaking \$11 billion package.

But after traveling to China in May, Trump described arms sales to Taiwan as a "**good negotiating chip**" with Beijing and refrained from approving the newest arms sales package to Taiwan.