



AS IT IS

Taiwan Reports Largest Number of Chinese Warplanes in Its Airspace

June 15, 2021

The government of Taiwan reports that 28 Chinese military aircraft entered the island's air defense identification zone on Tuesday. That is the largest number of Chinese aircraft reported to enter Taiwan's air space.

The news comes after leaders from the Group of Seven nations issued a joint statement Sunday criticizing China on several points. The leaders of the world's seven richest democracies also declared the importance of peace across the Taiwan Strait.

China condemned the comments as "**slander.**"

Taiwan says China's air force has repeatedly entered its air space over recent months. Most of the activity has happened in the southwestern part of its air defense area, near the Pratas Islands, which Taiwan controls.

The latest Chinese operation involved 14 J-16 and six J-11 jet fighters and four H-6 bombers. These aircraft can carry nuclear weapons, as well as anti-submarine and electronic warfare devices, Taiwan's Defense Ministry said. Early warning and control, radar aircraft also were reported.

It was the largest daily activity since the ministry began regularly reporting Chinese air force activities in Taiwan's air defense area last year. An earlier record of 25 aircraft was reported on April 12.

The ministry added that Taiwan launched military aircraft to **intercept** and warn away the Chinese aircraft. Missile systems were also deployed.

A map provided by the ministry showed Chinese bombers and some of the fighter aircraft also flew around the southern part of Taiwan.

China's Defense Ministry did not answer a Reuters request for comment.

In the past, Chinese officials described such activities as necessary to protect the country's sovereignty and deal with, what they called, "**collusion**" between Taiwan and the U.S.

The United States has no official diplomatic ties with Taiwan. But the U.S. has watched with concern Taiwan's increasing tensions with mainland China.

Taiwan has been a self-ruling area since the end of China's civil war in 1949.

The Chinese government describes Taiwan as its most **sensitive** territorial issue. It has warned the U.S. against interference.

And China has never denied the possible use of force to end Taiwan's self-rule.

I'm Jonathan Evans.

Ben Blanchard reported on this story for the Reuters news service. Jonathan Evans adapted this story for Learning English. Mario Ritter, Jr. was the editor.

Words in This Story

slander *-n.* the act of making a false spoken statement that causes people to have a bad opinion of someone

intercept *-v.* to prevent something from going from one place to another

collusion *-n.* secret cooperation for a dishonest or illegal purpose

sensitive *-adj.* needing to be dealt with in a careful or secret way

