

China's military wants more teeth to counter India, US, Japan

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Beijing: Bracketing India along with the US, Japan, Taiwan and Vietnam as "threats" to China's airspace, the PLA in a study has sought the broadening of its air surveillance and attack capabilities with high-speed cruise missiles and a new generation of bombers.

China's Air Force Command Academy in its report last year identified the United States, Japan, Taiwan, India and Vietnam as "threats" to its military airspace until the year 2030, Japanese news agency Kyodo reported.

While the massive expansion of Chinese navy with a second aircraft carrier and a new bomber to operate from its decks attracted worldwide attention, the new study showed that the airforce has started developing a similar expansion strategy, the report said.

The study called for nine types of strategic equipment to counter the threats, which included high-speed air-launched cruise missiles, large transport planes, an airship that moves in the upper atmosphere, a next-generation fighter, unmanned attack aircraft, air-force satellites and precision-guided bombs.

It said the 2.3 million-strong People's Liberation Army (PLA), the world's largest, needs to broaden its air surveillance and attack capabilities to the western Pacific, including the areas near Japan to ensure its command.

The PLA operates with an annual budget of about USD 145 billion, over three times India's USD 40-billion budget. The Beijing-based academy, a thinktank of an air force leadership training organisation, prepared the report in November last year. Studies by the academy have previously served as policy guidelines, the report said.

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