

Cross-Strait

71 Chinese warplanes fly in vicinity of Taiwan Saturday: MND

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Taipei, April 8 (CNA) A total of 71 Chinese military aircraft and nine naval ships were detected in the general vicinity of Taiwan on Saturday as of 4 p.m., as China appeared to ramp up its deployment of aircraft missions in the area, according to Taiwan's military.

A total of 45 warplanes either crossed the Taiwan Strait median line or flew into the southwestern part of Taiwan's air defense identification zone (ADIZ), the Ministry of National Defense (MND) said, without providing any further breakdown of the routes.

Among the Chinese military planes deployed were J-10 fighters, J-11 fighters, J-16 fighters, Y-20 transport aircraft, H-6K bomber aircraft, and KJ-500 airborne early warning and control aircraft, the MND said.

The ministry noted, as it usually does when talking about incursions by People's Liberation Army (PLA) aircraft into Taiwan's ADIZ, that the military scrambled combat air and naval patrols and deployed defense missile systems to track the Chinese military aircraft and warships.

The MND also released the photos of Chinese frigate Ma'anshan and destroyer Suzhou, and said it was keeping close tabs on those vessels' movements.

The ministry condemned Beijing for what it described as its irrational act that has jeopardized regional security and stability.

The number of aircraft deployed was far higher than the daily tallies seen in recent weeks, possibly in response to a 10-day overseas trip by President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) that included a meeting with U.S. House Speaker Kevin McCarthy in California.

The PLA announced Saturday morning that it was launching three days of military exercises around Taiwan, but did not specify what exactly the drills would consist of.

(By Novia Huang and Lee Hsin-Yin)