

## Taichung base to be main target in Hang Kuang drills

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Lockheed C-130 Hercules military transport aircraft move down a runway yesterday at the Ching Chuan Kang Air Base in Taichung.

**Photo: Lo Tian-pin, Taipei Times**

The Hang Kuang field exercises this year are to simulate a Chinese attack on the Ching Chuan Kang (清川崗) Air Base in Taichung, a senior Ministry of National Defense official said yesterday.

An exercise to repel an amphibious invasion is to be staged on Thursday next week in Penghu County by all branches of the armed forces, followed the next day by the “assault” on Ching Chuan Kang Air Base, the official said on condition of anonymity.

The air base is to come under attack from the north, south and east, the official said.

An air-land scenario has been devised to address the growing threat of a multi-directional Chinese attack launched from the sea against high-value military targets, the official said.

It is likely that China’s People’s Liberation Army (PLA) has included those options in case of a cross-strait war because PLA aviation exercises are increasingly conducted in air and sea space to the east, north and south of Taiwan, the official said.

The defense of the base will be the final stage of the field exercises, and is to take place under

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the assumption that Chinese missile strikes on Taiwan's air and naval bases and political-military centers have degraded the nation's radar and air-defense systems, the official said.

Under that hypothesis, the PLA might launch additional strikes via long-range bombers and carrier-based planes on Taiwan proper, the official said.

The ministry's initial plan to defend the airbase included only simulated attacks by Chinese airborne units, but on May 1 senior commanders added air attacks by fighters and bombers to the mix, the official said.

According to an air traffic notice from the military, a pair of Dassault Mirage 2000 fighters from the Hsinchu Air Base would first act as combat air patrol, before becoming the aggressor and reconnoitering the air space over Taichung.

Four AIDC F-CK-1s from the Tainan Air Base are to simulate air attacks on the Taichung base, while four F-16s based in Hualien are to cross the Central Mountain Range to attack it.

A mixed air squadron based in Pingtung County is to conduct a simulated attack by airborne troops.

The invaders are to launch a paratroop attack by dropping six planeloads of special operations forces as well as supplies and vehicles.

Defensive actions are to involve all branches, including interceptions by air force fighters and army surface-to-air missiles.

Army and marines ground troops will conduct anti-airborne missions and counterattacks to retake the base, the official said.

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