

to be delivered in 2005-6. It is acquiring six AS350s, a mix of new and used, to replace its Lamas. Ex-US Army Chinooks are being considered to boost the army's lift capability.

Fleet review

Only the five MD530 helicopters are armed, so the army is seeking attack helicopters, releasing an RFP in September 2002.

Type	Active	Stored	Order/Req
TRANSPORT			
CN-235	3		
C-212-100/300	6		
Cessna 208	3		5/
King Air B90	1		
Beech Baron	1		
Citation III	1		
PA-31	4		
Cessna 182R			8/
COMBAT HELICOPTER			
MD530F	21		
SA315B Lama		3	
AS350B Squirrel	2		4/
AS332B/AS332M2	1/1		
SA330F/L Puma	8	4	
CH-47			5/
TRAINING AIRCRAFT/HELICOPTERS			
R172K Hawk XP	8	5	

CHINA

ZHONGGUO JIEFANGJUN KONGJIN (PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY AIR FORCE)

On paper, China's air force is among the world's most powerful, with around 4,000 aircraft in service. In reality, it is more a collection of museum pieces, but China has an ambitious modernisation programme.

Operational activity

China's air force has not seen action since the 1960s when fighter units were drawn into some skirmishes against US aircraft during the Vietnam War. Fighter aircraft regularly intercept US intelligence gathering aircraft off China's coastlines, which resulted in the accidental damage to a US Navy EP-3 in 2001. Regular exercises are conducted near Taiwan.

Procurement

Russia remains China's main supplier of advanced aerospace equipment. Two batches of Sukhoi Su-27Ps (J-11) have been delivered since April 1991, and the first of 200 licence-built examples flew from Shenyang in December 1998. China has followed its Su-27 acquisition with orders for 78 Su-30MKK long-range strike fighters. Deliveries began in early 2001. A new version, the Su-30MKK2 was unveiled in August 2003 and a batch of between 28 and 50 was ordered in late 2002. Unlike India's Su-30s, China's fighters are not equipped with canards or thrust vectoring and are fitted with Russian avionics rather than a combination of Indian, Israeli and Russian systems. China is keen also to licence-produce the Su-30. Acquisition of the Su-27/Su-30 includes the potent AA-12/R77 MRAAM.

The J-10 programme is intended to replace its J-7 lightweight fighter. The J-10 draws heavily upon the cancelled Israeli Lavi programme: examples entered service in 2002 and 80 are due to be produced by 2005.

Also in development is the Super Seven/FC-1 or JF-17, for which China is receiving technical assistance from Russia. China and Pakistan have formally agreed joint development of the aircraft, which will be fitted with Western avionics. The first prototype flew in mid-2003 and construction of the first batch of 16 is underway with eight being built for China. Possible requirements could involve hundreds of aircraft for the PLAAF. The PLAAF is also looking to procure AEW aircraft, but a contract with Israel Aircraft Industries to equip one Beriev A-50 (Il-76) fell foul of the USA, which exerted enough pressure on Israel for it to abandon the contract. Since then it has independently developed an AEW platform dubbed the A-50EH, which has been observed undergoing trials. China's jet trainer, the Hongdu K-8, has been developed with Pakistan: China is expected to order 200, but although around 30 are thought to have been delivered the air force is reluctant to take further machines. China has also expressed an

interest in the An-70. China has requested six Il-78 tankers from Russia, along with perhaps another 30 Il-76 transports.

Fleet review

China's "strategic" bomber force is centred on 120 H-6s (Tu-16s) which also provide the PLAAF with its nuclear strike capability. Some H-6s have been converted to tankers, as have some Il-76s. The bulk of the fighter force operates Chinese derivatives of Russian MiG-17/19/21 designs which are now considered obsolete.

Type	Active	Stored	Order/Req
COMBAT AIRCRAFT			
Xian H-6 (Tu-16)	100		
Harbin H-5 (Il-28)	350		
J-8/J-8II Finback	100		/300
J-11(Su-27SK/UBK)	40/10		20UBK/200
Su-30MKK/UBK	27/9		
Su-30MKK2			28-50/
J-10/F-10	15		/300
J-6/A/B/C(MiG-19)	2,600		
J-7 (MiG-21)	400		
Q-5 Fantan	500		
J-5/5A (MiG-17PF)	400		
FC-1	4 (prototype)		
ISTAR/SPECIAL MISSION			
A-50EH AEW testbed	1		
Tu-154M/D	2		8/
An-30	8		
TANKER			
Il-78	15		6/
TRANSPORT			
Harbin Y-11/Y-12	17		
Il-18	4		
Shaanxi Y-8	29		
CL601 Challenger	5		
767-300ER	1		
Y-5 (An-2)	300		
Y-7 (An-24)	54	4	
Y-14 (An-26)	80		
Z37-3TO	6		
Cessna 550 Citation	7		
Learjet	5		
Il-76MD			30/
COMBAT HELICOPTER			
HarbinZ-5/Z-6(Mi-4)	300		
TRAINING AIRCRAFT/HELICOPTERS			
K-8 Karakorum	30		/170
Chengdu JJ-5	100		
Guizhou JJ-7	50		
Harbin HZ-5/HJ-5	40		
Nanchang CJ-6	1,500		
Shenyang J-4 (MiG-17F)	350		
Shenyang JJ-6	150		

AVIATION OF THE PEOPLE'S NAVY

The navy has given up ambitions to develop carrier borne capabilities and is concentrating on modernizing its land-based forces.

Operational activity. Major exercises to practice amphibious assaults on Taiwan now take place on an annual basis.

Procurement

The first Su-30MKKs entered service this year armed with Kh-31 anti-ship missiles. Requirements for modern maritime patrol aircraft and embarked anti-submarine warfare helicopters are believed to exist.

Fleet review

Navy equipment includes about 150 H-5s in three anti-ship divisions, and 30 H-6s, some of which have been modified as tankers. A coastal defence fighter force operates the J-5, J-6 and Q-5 in six divisions under the control of the PLAAF region in which they are located. The navy has eight destroyers compatible with the Z-9, while the Super Frelons – some of which were licence-built – deploy at sea aboard a range of larger ships. It also has a helicopter training carrier.

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Type	Active	Stored	Order/Req
COMBAT AIRCRAFT			
Su-30MKK	10		20/
Harbin H-5(II-28)	150+		
H-6 III (Tu-16)	11		
J-8II/IIID	100/24		

Xian JH-7	30
J-7 I/II/III	240
J-6/JJ-6 (MiG-19)	74/24
J-5A (MiG-17PF)	136
Q-5 Fantan	100
ISTAR/SPECIAL MISSION	
Harbin SH-5	5
Be 6	15
TANKER	
Harbin H-6 (Tu-16)	11
Yak-42	2
TRANSPORT	
Y-7 (An-24)	10
Y-5 (An-2)	40
Y-8	20
COMBAT HELICOPTER	
Harbin Z-5 (Mi-4)	40
Harbin Z-9(SA365)	25
Ka-28PL/PS Helix	4/4
Z-8/SA321 Super Frelon	20

ARMY AVIATION CORPS

Established in 1988 by the transfer of utility helicopters from the air force, the army aviation corps' role is to support ground troops as a transport force, although the Gazelles have a limited combat capability.

Operational activity

The aviation corps has yet to see action but conducts regular exercises.

Procurement

China's army has an attack helicopter need – which could be met by an indigenous design – as part of a massive modernisation programme, as could its requirement for utility machines. More Mi-17s are likely to be bought. Eight EC120s were ordered during 2004 with an option for 50 more.

Fleet review

Serviceability of the older Z-8s and Z-6s is considered to be very low.

Type	Active	Stored	Order/Req
COMBAT HELICOPTER			
SA342L-1 Gazelle	8		
S-70C-II	24		
Mi-17	24		
Mi-171/V5	18/5		
Mi-8	30		
Mi-6	10		
Harbin Z-9W(SA365)	60		
AS332 Super Puma	6		
Harbin Z-5 (Mi-4)	250		
Bell 214	4		
Z-8	75		
Z-6	100		
Changhe Z-11	4		
Z-8/SA31JA Super Frelon	2		
EC120			8/50

COLOMBIA

Colombia is a key ally in Washington's war on drugs and it is the largest recipient of US military aid in South America. Under the Plan Colombia, the USA has provided large numbers of surplus and new helicopters to its military and paramilitary police.

Operational activity

Counter-insurgency and anti-drug missions continue at a high level of intensity. FARC rebels remain the main focus of government military operations. US advisers and technical experts are assigned to most Colombian military and police units. Much of this work is outsourced to private US companies by the Pentagon, including the flying of air surveillance missions.

Procurement

Helicopters remain Colombia's top procurement priority, to improve the mobility of ground forces. Colombia has recently revived its \$254 million requirement for up to 24 light counter-insurgency aircraft to replace its OV-10s and A-37s, with EMB-314s, KO-1s, PC-21s and T-6A Texan IIs all contenders. It is also seeking up to eight ex-USN P-3s for maritime surveillance, although any deal could be restricted to smaller and cheaper aircraft such as the CN-235 or An-32. The US government is to hand over 60 helicopters to Colombia's army and police force for anti-drugs work. Deliveries of UH-60s began