

(Press release)

December 10, 2025
The Ministry of Defense

Japan Ministry of Defense Statement on the Radar Incident against Japan Air Self-Defense Force Aircraft by Chinese Military Aircraft on Dec. 6th

With regard to the Chinese state media reports concerning the radar incident that occurred on Saturday, December 6, the Ministry of Defense would like to clarify the following four points.

(Regarding the Notification Allegedly Made by the Chinese Side)

First, concerning the notification allegedly made by the Chinese side:

While it would be inappropriate to comment on each audio clip reported by Chinese state media, on December 6, the day the radar incident occurred, one of JMSDF vessels received short communication from a Chinese Navy vessel, near the Kuznetsov-class CV “Liaoning”, stating that they were about to commence flight training, and the Japanese side copied the message.

However, no specific information was provided to the JSDF regarding the scale of the training to be conducted by the carrier-based aircraft from “Liaoning”, or the airspace in which such training would take place. Furthermore, neither NOTAMs (Notice to Airmen) indicating the time, or latitude and longitude of the training area nor navigation warnings for vessels were issued in advance. As a result, Japan did not receive sufficient information necessary to ensure safety and avoid danger.

(Appropriateness of the Scramble by the Self-Defense Forces)

Second, the scramble conducted by the Self-Defense Forces were both appropriate and necessary. Okinawa Island, Kitadaitō Island, Minamidaitō Island, and Okidaitō Island are located near the waters in which “Liaoning” was operating. It is natural and imperative for the Ministry of Defense and JSDF, which are responsible for safeguarding Japan’s territorial airspace and protecting the lives and property of the Japanese people, to appropriately conduct airspace intrusion countermeasures against carrier-based aircraft launched from “Liaoning”, regardless of whether prior notification of the training was provided.

(Radar Use by Japan Air Self-Defense Force Aircraft)

Third, the JASDF F-15 fighter aircraft conducting airspace intrusion countermeasures on December 6 did not use their radar against the carrier-based aircraft of “Liaoning”.

(Essence of the Issue)

Fourth and most importantly, the essence of the issue is that, while Japan was appropriately conducting airspace intrusion countermeasures, Chinese military aircraft intermittently

illuminated JASDF fighter aircraft with radar for approximately 30 minutes. Such actions exceed the range necessary for the safe operation of aircraft and constitute dangerous behavior. Japan will continue to strongly demand China prevent any recurrence of such acts.

The Ministry of Defense also takes pride in the JASDF pilots who calmly carried out their mission under an extremely tense situation in which they were subjected to prolonged radar illumination, as well as in the ground crews who supported them. The Ministry of Defense and JSDF will continue to demonstrate such professionalism and respond in a calm and resolute manner.

As Minister Koizumi conveyed to Minister Dong Jun during the recent Japan–China Defense Ministerial Meeting held in Malaysia, Japan believes it is indispensable for both sides to persistently engage in candid dialogue and communication, without avoiding concrete and difficult issues, precisely because such circumstances exist. The Ministry of Defense will continue to ensure robust intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance activities in the sea and airspace surrounding Japan, while also maintaining close communication between our respective defense authorities.