

CENTRE FOR JOINT WARFARE STUDIES



CENJOWS

UNMANNED TRANSPORT AIRCRAFTS & MARITIME HELICOPTER OF CHINA

1. **Chinese Unmanned Transport Aircraft Carries out Heavy Military Air Drop for PLA.** Chinese PLA reportedly carried out heavy cargo air drop exercise using an unmanned single-engine biplane transport aircraft, the designation of which was not revealed. The exercise was jointly held in mid-Jun 19 by the National Defense University of the PLA and China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation at Zhangye in Northwest China's Gansu Province. The exercise involved a biplane – the CCTV grab of which is shown below - carrying a cargo of military supplies weighing more than 500 kg for more than 500 km, and successfully airdropping it into a target zone on a plateau with a complicated terrain.



2. **Comments.** This is the first time China has conducted a parachuted aerial delivery of heavy cargo over long distance with an unmanned transport aircraft. China is

exploring a new mode of strategic and tactical logistics support by delivering military cargo using UAVs. Therefore, more unmanned transport aircraft could join the Chinese military logistics set up in future. A Chinese military expert felt that since transport aircraft usually do not need to make intense and complicated maneuvers like fighter jets, even heavier cargo delivery missions could become unmanned as this technology matures. Since airdrops often take place within the range of hostile anti-aircraft fire, so using UAVs negates risk to life. It is thus a significant development in PLA's unmanned logistics chain management for future warfare.

Source: <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1155338.shtml>

3. PLA Navy Tests Maritime Variant of New Z-20 Helicopter for Ship-Borne Roles. A test naval variant of the Chinese Army's Z-20 utility helicopter was reportedly seen undergoing testing on a PLA Navy destroyer for the first time, in mid Jun 19. Though there was no official name accorded to the testing helicopter, the characteristic appearance of Z-20 in the photos in Chinese social media made it clearly identifiable.

4. Comments. The testing indicates that the PLA is studying practical adaptability of the Z-20 helicopters for operations from ships. Compared to other in-service shipboard helicopters like Z-8 and Z-9, the Z-20 medium-lift utility helicopter - which is often compared to the US' UH-60 Black Hawk - has a takeoff weight of about 10 Tons and can accommodate 12-15 fully-equipped troops. It has a payload capacity of 5000 kg, of which it can carry around 1000 kg internally and 4000 kg under slung. Thus, it can better adapt to situations at sea. It would be able to operate from bigger platforms like destroyers, amphibious landing docks, amphibious assault ships and aircraft carriers, undertaking a wide range of tasks including anti-submarine warfare, reconnaissance missions, transportation as well as SAR. The helicopter could also play an important role in the multidimensional and digitized battle scenario.

5. Adapting the army version helicopters to ship-based variant though, entails additional reduction in its size to enable stowage in the hangar through design alterations like foldable rotor blades. Such equipment also requires extra anti-corrosion measures and stronger landing gear. The PLA Army's version of the Z-20 is reportedly flying on trial basis for last three years, but the formal induction has not yet been officially confirmed.

Source: http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2019-07/03/content_9546046.htm; <http://www.military-today.com/helicopters/z20.htm>