

China Builds Mock U.S. Warship in Desert for Missile Target Practice

Debris from previous missile strikes litters the sand around a full-scale replica of an American guided-missile destroyer sitting in the middle of a Chinese desert, according to satellite images released Wednesday and reported by The Daily Wire.

The communist regime has constructed what appears to be an exact copy of a U.S. Navy Arleigh Burke-class destroyer at a remote weapons-testing site in Xinjiang's Taklamakan Desert. The structure, captured in imagery from May 2026, matches ships currently deployed with the U.S. Seventh Fleet, the naval force responsible for protecting the Western Pacific and the waters surrounding Taiwan.

Joseph Wu, co-founder of the Taiwan Defense Studies Initiative, first identified the mock warship.

The assessment based on available information is clear: China is using these replicas for target practice to develop and refine anti-ship weaponry. The scattered debris surrounding the fake destroyer suggests the site has already seen significant testing activity.

This discovery comes at a moment of heightened tension across the Taiwan Strait. Earlier this month, Taiwan conducted its first live-fire exercise on the coast facing China, launching dozens of practice rockets from HIMARS launchers into the strait. The drill simulated a response to a Chinese invasion.



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Western allies are taking notice of Beijing's increasingly aggressive posture. On Wednesday, the de facto British, French, and German embassies in Taipei issued a rare joint statement expressing concern over recent Chinese coast guard patrols in the waters east of Taiwan. The diplomatic missions warned that such activity threatened regional stability and freedom of navigation.

The desert replica is far from an isolated incident. China has been building mock-ups of American military assets for years. Back in 2021, the U.S. Naval Institute reported satellite imagery showing two similar destroyer models and an aircraft carrier at a testing range in the southeastern region of the same desert in Ruqiang.

Beyond naval vessels, recreations of U.S. airfields and Taiwanese roads have appeared in these remote desert locations over the years. The pattern suggests a systematic effort by Beijing to prepare its military for potential conflicts involving American forces and Taiwan.

Military experts note that building mock-ups for testing purposes is common practice around the world. Nations routinely construct replicas to evaluate weapons systems and train personnel. But the complex and deteriorating relationship between the United States and China transforms these desert structures into something more ominous.

The specific targeting of Arleigh Burke-class destroyers carries strategic significance. These ships form the backbone of the U.S. Navy's surface fleet and would likely play a central role in any American response to Chinese aggression in the Pacific. By perfecting missiles designed to destroy these vessels, Beijing is clearly preparing for the possibility of direct military confrontation with the United States.

Neither China's Defense Ministry nor the U.S. Department of Defense responded to requests for comment from Bloomberg.

For Americans who understand that peace comes through strength, the satellite images serve as a stark reminder. While Washington debates domestic priorities and defense budgets, the Chinese Communist Party is quite literally taking aim at the ships that protect American interests and allies in the Pacific.

The mock destroyer in the Taklamakan Desert stands as a silent warning. China is preparing for war. The question facing American leaders and citizens alike is whether we're taking that preparation seriously enough.

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