

### First PLA Rocket Force CJ-100 Unit Likely Identified

There is a limited body of evidence that strongly suggests the People's Liberation Army Rocket Force (PLARF) is equipping its 656<sup>th</sup> Brigade with the CJ-100 cruise missile (alternatively known as the DF-100). This assessment is based on an image of a probable CJ-100 transporter-erector-launcher (TEL) located at the 656<sup>th</sup> Brigade's home garrison in Laiwu, Shandong.



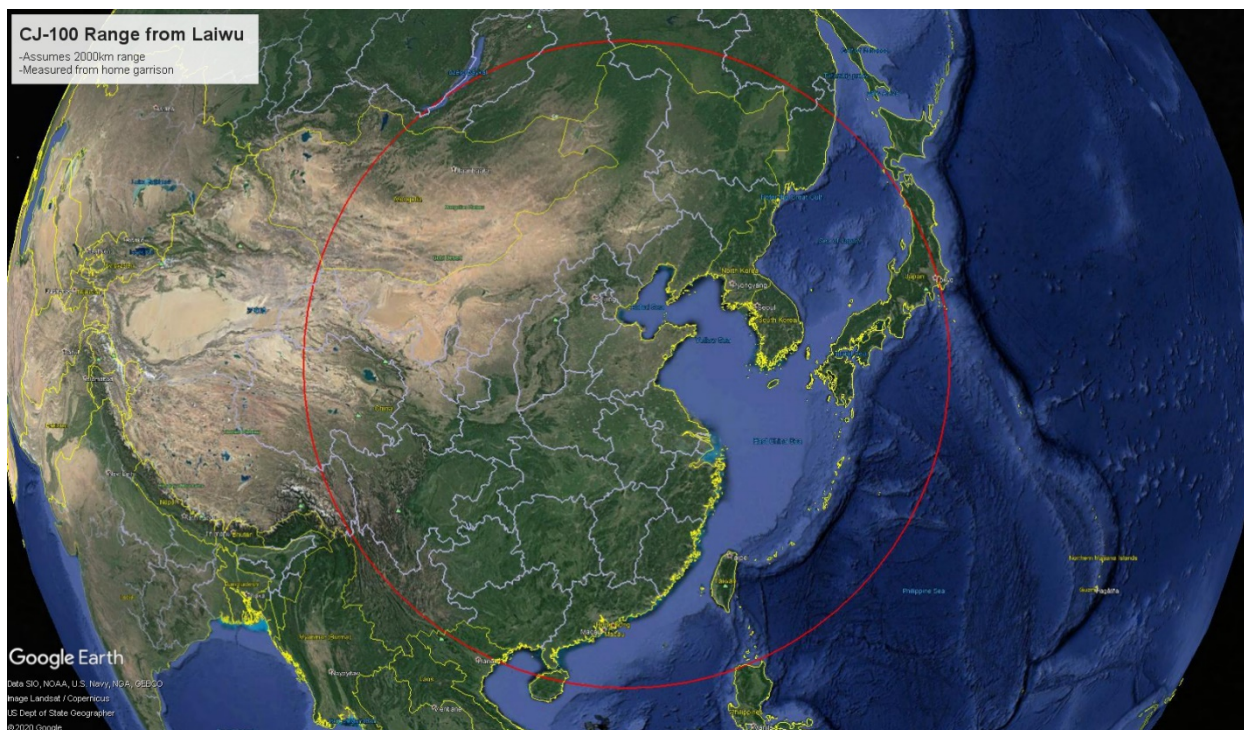
*Figure 1: CASI has identified a vehicle located at the 656<sup>th</sup> Brigade's home garrison in Laiwu that is nearly identical to these known CJ-100 TELs featured in the People's Republic of China's October 2019 military parade.*

Many non-authoritative references suggest that the PLARF's 623<sup>rd</sup> and or the 635<sup>th</sup> Brigade are also equipped with CJ-100s because personnel from these units participated in the October 2019 military parade. Although it is possible that one or both brigades have also received CJ-100 cruise missiles, CASI is currently unable to corroborate such reports with direct evidence. Given the lack of direct evidence suggesting that the 623<sup>rd</sup> or 635<sup>th</sup> Brigade is equipped with CJ-100 cruise missiles, the 656<sup>th</sup> Brigade may be the first operational unit to receive CJ-100s.

By using the known PLARF timelines for introducing other types of new missiles into the force, it may be possible to project when the 656<sup>th</sup> Brigade will reach full operational capability (FOC). PRC media reporting suggests that the first PLARF unit to receive a new type of missile typically spend four to

five years as a testing and training unit within an operational base before converting to an official brigade. The PLARF will then gradually equip the brigade with a full complement of equipment over the span of two to four years before publicizing the unit.

PRC media reporting states that the 656<sup>th</sup> Brigade achieved “brigade” status sometime in late 2019. This suggests the unit has already been upgraded from a testing and training unit to a full brigade. If the 656<sup>th</sup> Brigade is in fact being equipped with CJ-100 cruise missiles and follows previous trends for a new missile system introduced into the force, it may reach FOC sometime in 2022 or 2023.



Assuming a maximum kinematic range of 2,000km, A CJ-100 equipped unit in the Laiwu region would be able to strike targets anywhere in Taiwan, Korea, and most of Japan from its home garrison. If the CJ-100 can target maritime targets, the 656<sup>th</sup> Brigade would also be able to threaten vessels well outside the first island chain north of the Babuyan Channel up to the Sea of Japan.

Although the CJ-100 cruise missile does not provide the PLARF with the ability to strike new targets previously beyond the range of conventional missile systems, it does provide the PLARF with a multi-axis attack capability against some targets previously only within range of ballistic missiles. A PLARF capability to conduct simultaneous time-on-target strikes consisting of both CJ-100 cruise missiles and DF-21 or DF-26 ballistic missiles almost certainly complicates US and partner nation missile defense considerations.

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