



China's Challenge to FPV Drones: How Beijing Is Reinventing Armored Vehicle Protection

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The war in Ukraine has demonstrated that **inexpensive FPV (First-Person View) drones** can attack tanks from above, striking the **turret roof** — historically the most vulnerable point of the armor. In response to these developments, China's **People's Liberation Army (PLA)** is reshaping its armored vehicle protection strategies.

Technological countermeasures: The GL-6 system and intelligent brigades

To counter high-angle attacks, China's defense industry is developing **active interception solutions and networked systems**:

- **GL-6 Active Protection System (APS):** Tests conducted by state-owned giant **Norinco** show that the GL-6 can **intercept threats approaching from above** (drones, loitering munitions, and missiles) and simultaneously engage **simultaneous aerial and ground attacks**.
- **Intelligent combined brigade:** Unveiled at the Zhuhai Airshow, this concept integrates armored vehicles into a network of **reconnaissance drones, electronic warfare (EW) assets, and counter-drone systems** to detect and neutralize threats before impact.

Tactical adaptations and physical protection

Alongside high technology, the PLA is employing **emergency physical and tactical solutions** :

- **Protective screens and cages:** The use of **metal cage covers, nets, and additional composite modules** on vehicle roofs. Although effective, PLA publications emphasize that these structures entail **drawbacks in terms of visibility, mobility, and weapon traverse**.
- **Camouflage and signature management:** During tactical exercises, Chinese crews are trained to **conceal vehicles in depressions, erect camouflage nets, erase track marks, and employ smoke screens** to disrupt the drone tracking chain.

Outstanding challenges

The analysis highlights that **no single technology provides complete protection**. PLA researchers acknowledge several critical challenges:

1. **Limited engagement windows:** Difficulty tracking and intercepting small targets within extremely short timeframes.
2. **Attack saturation:** The high costs of interception systems risk being offset by **swarms of FPV drones or fiber-optic-guided drones**.
3. **Remaining vulnerabilities:** Increased protection for tanks is prompting anti-armor forces to **focus on support vehicles and logistics**.

China's strategy is based on **layered protection** combining **active defense (APS), modular physical protection, electronic countermeasures, and camouflage**. The real effectiveness of this approach will depend on the **speed with which China can transfer**

these innovations from the testing phase to operational units.

News link: <https://breakingdefense.com/2026/09/how-china-is-rethinking-tank-survival-against-fpvs-and-top-attack-threats/>