

Friday Dispatch
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SYLLOGE ON CHINA

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China's lunar rover travels over 357 meters on moon's far side

Xinhua, January 3, 2020

China's lunar rover Yutu 2 has driven 357.695 meters on the far side of the moon to conduct scientific exploration of the virgin territory. Both the lander and the rover of the Chang'e 4 probe have ended their work for the 13th lunar day on Thursday (Beijing time), and switched to dormant mode for the lunar night, according to the Lunar Exploration and Space Program Center of the China National Space Administration.

The scientific instruments on the lander and rover worked as planned. The rover conducted explorations of several sites and photographed and conducted an infrared detection of a stone on the lunar surface, said the center. China's Chang'e 4 probe, launched on Dec 8, 2018, made the first-ever soft landing on the Von Karman Crater in the South Pole-Aitken Basin on the far side of the moon on Jan. 3, 2019.

<https://global.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202001/03/WS5e0ed2bea310cf3e3558252e.html>

Xi signs mobilization order for training of armed forces

Xinhua, January 3, 2020

President Xi Jinping Thursday signed a mobilization order for the training of the armed forces, the first order of the Central Military Commission (CMC) in 2020. Issued by Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the CMC, the order stressed strengthening military training in real combat conditions.

It also asked the armed forces to maintain a high level of readiness and step up emergency and combat training. The order required strengthened joint command in training. It also stressed integrating new forces into the joint operations system. Force-on-force training should also be strengthened and the evaluation system should be improved, according to the order.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-01/02/c_138674124.htm

Xi Signs Order for Military Training

China Daily, January 3, 2020

President Xi Jinping ordered the Chinese military to further strengthen its combat training and exercises this year on January 2. Xi, who is also General Secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, signed the

commission's first order for 2020 that listed priorities in the training of the People's Liberation Army and the People's Armed Police Force. The order requested the armed forces to stick to Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era as their guiding principle and uphold Xi Jinping Thought on Strengthening the Military, as well as military strategies in the new era.

The military must enhance its troops' combat preparedness, closely observe adversaries' moves, exert all-out efforts to improve training and remain on high alert to ensure it is always ready for, and can win in, any possible war, the order said. Training must be focused on elements leading to victory, and thorough research must be done on operational goals, enemies and the combat environment, it said. The order required that units must concentrate on their missions and give more attention to emergency-response capabilities. They must also strive to foster the abilities to construct a favorable situation on the front line, control possible crises, and contain or win in a war.

Training and exercises for joint operations must be priorities, it requested, adding that the military must strengthen the participation of civilians and new types of forces in systemic training. Troops must inject more scientific and technological factors into training and carry out more mobilization drills, according to the document. More exercises will be organized to examine and test units' command, planning, fighting and logistical capabilities. The order also stipulated that officers and soldiers must follow training guidelines while the authorities must conduct strict evaluation and supervision of training and also arrange skills contests. 2020 is the third consecutive year that Xi has issued a training order to the Chinese military. The first such order was issued in January 2018 when the president oversaw and addressed a massive training-commencement ceremony at a shooting range in northern China.

http://www.bjreview.com.cn/Latest_Headlines/202001/t20200103_800189113.html

Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen says military must safeguard national security in wake of Black Hawk crash

Sarah Zheng

South China Morning Post, January 3, 2020

Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen on Friday urged the island's armed forces to be on alert for any threat to national security following the helicopter crash that killed eight senior military personnel. The military had to ensure the security of the Taiwan Strait and that was the best way to remember Shen Yi-ming, Taiwan's chief of staff, who was the highest ranking officer to die in the crash, she said after a meeting with Defence Minister Yen Te-fa and senior officers.

“We must guarantee the safety of our surrounding Taiwan Strait, and the military must closely follow military developments in the Taiwan Strait, so they can respond and deploy as soon as possible to ensure our national security,” she said.

Tsai paid tribute to those who died when the UH-60M Black Hawk helicopter carrying 13 people crashed on Thursday morning in a mountainous region of northern Taiwan. She said she had also ordered a full investigation into what brought down the aircraft as it was en route from Songshan airport in Taipei to Yilan county to take part in New Year military activities. She said that in a rare move Shen had been posthumously promoted to become a first-level general – the highest rank. He was also awarded the Order of Blue Sky and White Sun with Grand Cordon, Taiwan’s second-highest military honour which is granted to those who have made an outstanding contribution to national defence. “Continuing to stand by our posts is the best way to remember chief of general staff Shen,” she said. The helicopter, which had no record of mechanical problems, disappeared from radar screens at 8:07am after taking off at 7:54am. It later crashed in the mountains of New Taipei county’s Wulai district.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3044458/taiwans-president-tsai-ing-wen-says-island-must-safeguard>

Chinese rocket contractor reveals plans for record-setting 40-plus launches in 2020

Global Times, January 2, 2020

China's biggest rocket contractor China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASC) aims to complete more than 40 missions in 2020 including maiden flights for three rockets as well as lunar and Mars probe missions. According to the official CASC WeChat public account on Thursday, China will usher in a "super 2020" in the space sector, aiming for 40-plus missions for the first time in history. The 2020 launches will include completion of BeiDou Navigation Satellite System, phase 3 of the Chang'e-5 lunar probe mission and the launch of the country's first ever Mars probe.

Long March-5B, a smaller variant of the Long March-5 and the strongest member of China's carrier rocket family will make its maiden flight in 2020. Also, Long March-7A, which could lift around 7 ton of payload into geostationary transfer orbit (GTO) and Long March-8, whose payload capability reaches 5 ton to Sun-synchronous orbit with an altitude of 700 kilometers, will also take their first flights in 2020, according to CASC. CASC completed 27 launches in 2019, sending 66 spacecrafts into space.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1175580.shtml>

Now Russia Accuses China of Technology Theft

James M. Dorsey

The Globalist, January 2, 2020

The question is for how long Russia can afford a benign, acquiescent attitude and look the other way when China steals military technology. Chinese technology theft is unlikely to persuade Russia any time soon to forego the strategic advantages of its geopolitical cooperation with China. When it comes to arms, Russia's preferred strategy is to try pressuring China to engage in joint weapons development, while seeking to maintain a technological edge for itself.

With China's defense industry significantly improving its technological capabilities, Russia needs to ensure that it remains crucial to China's military development for economic reasons.

Chinese-Russian military and geopolitical cooperation is flourishing – for now. And that has Washington worried. However, if the weapons industry is anything to go by, a fraying at the edges of close ties between the two Asian powers may be on the horizon. To be sure, Russia remains by far China's foremost arms supplier. But that doesn't keep China from stealing Russian military technology, much like it allegedly does in the West.

So far, Russia, has been willing to look the other way. Equipped with a notoriously weak economy and a political regime that is desperately in need of the revenues of weapons sales, Moscow had no real alternative option. Military sales undergird Moscow's geopolitical heft. The question is for how long Russia can afford this benign, acquiescent attitude and look the other way when China steals military technology. By the same token, viewed in a broader strategic context, this is also a question that applies to various other opportunistic alliances. This notably includes the relationship between Russia, Turkey and Iran. Practical limits of the anti-U.S. brotherhoods What these relationships, often concluded to stand up to the United States, have in common is that they are driven by short-term interests. First and foremost, they reflect a desire to institutionalize a multipolar world in which U.S. power is counterbalanced by others.

These alliances, adopting pragmatic approaches, have so far worked by focusing on immediate interests, while carefully managing significant differences. Those differences, nonetheless, surface regularly. Recently, alleged Chinese intellectual property theft as well as diametrically opposed Turkish, Russian and Iranian policies towards conflicts in Syria and/or Libya that have figured prominently in media reports.

<https://www.theglobalist.com/russia-china-intellectual-property-theft-technology-arms-sales/>

China's 'dangerous' South China Sea plan almost complete

2 Jan, 2020 12:31pm 6 minutes to read

Jamie Seidel

The battle for the South China Sea is heating up. Vietnam. Malaysia. The Philippines. All have drawn lines in the sandbars against China. But it may already be too late. This past year, Vietnam stood its ground over the right to deploy an oil rig within its UN-mandated waters. Malaysia complained publicly of interference by the Chinese coastguard. The Philippines moved to secure its Scarborough Shoal islands. And, all the while, new nations have been joining the Freedom of Navigation pushback over Beijing's claims to the South China Sea. China's aggressive military moves have forced members of the traditionally timid Association of Southeastern Nations (Asean) to reassess their stance, news.com.au reports.

Many are already focused on modernising their armed forces, with defence spending in the region doubling over the past 15 years. That spending is moving away from counter-terrorism efforts towards higher-level conventional warfare. But nations like Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand are beginning to realise they cannot stand alone. September marked a seismic shift in the region's thinking. Ten Southeast Asian nations joined the United States Navy in five days of war games. While it involved only eight warships and four aircraft, it marked an unprecedented step down the path towards regional unity. But Chairman Xi Jinping's bellicose assertion of his nine-dash-line South China Sea policy is yet to be checked.

https://www.nzherald.co.nz/world/news/article.cfm?c_id=2&objectid=12297725