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रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

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Myanmar a perfect fit on China's Belt and Road

Bertil Lintner, Chiang Mai
Asia Times, January 27, 2020

Chinese President Xi Jinping's historic visit to Myanmar this month did not attract much regional media buzz, with most reports portraying the trip as more well-worn official promotion of his signature US\$1 trillion Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). But if the four most important of 33 agreements Xi signed with his Myanmar hosts during his tour are actually implemented – a big if considering BRI's spotty follow through on ballyhooed projects – they would have far-reaching economic, political and strategic implications for South and Southeast Asia.

The first of those big four are ambitious plans to build a high-speed railroad from Myanmar's northern border with southern China down to the central city of Mandalay and eventually to Myanmar's southern coast.

<https://www.asiatimes.com/2020/01/article/myanmar-a-perfect-fit-on-chinas-belt-and-road/>

China sends military medics to Wuhan

Xinhua, January 25, 2019

China has sent 450 military medical staff, including professionals who have experience in the fight against SARS or Ebola, to the novel coronavirus hardest-hit city of Wuhan. The medics, in three teams sent by medical universities of the army, navy and air force of the People's Liberation Army, arrived in Wuhan by military aircraft on Friday night. The teams, composed of experts in respiratory health, infectious diseases, hospital infection control and intensive care unit, will be dispatched to the Wuhan hospitals with large numbers of novel coronavirus-related pneumonia patients, according to the military authorities.

Chinese health authorities announced Saturday that 1,287 confirmed cases of pneumonia caused by the novel coronavirus, including 237 in critical conditions, had been reported in the country by the end of Friday. The pneumonia situation had resulted in 81 deaths, the National Health Commission said.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-01/25/c_138732741.htm

China to launch Mars probe in July

Xinhua, January 23, 2020

China announced that it will launch its first Mars mission probe in July this year, China Youth Daily reported Thursday, adding that this is the first time the country disclosed the launch month of its Mars exploration program. The Mars probe will be sent by the Long March 5 Y4 carrier rocket, said the newspaper, citing sources from the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASC).

The Long March-5 Y4 rocket has recently completed a 100-second test for its high thrust hydrogen-oxygen engine, which is the last engine examination before the final assembly. According to the CASC, China will send a probe to orbit and land and deploy a rover on Mars. In 2020, the Long March 5 rocket will carry out several missions, including the Mars probe launch and the lunar sample return. A total of 24 high thrust hydrogen-oxygen rocket engine tests will be conducted this year for these missions.

<http://global.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202001/23/WS5e2963eea310128217273086.html>

Chinese military aircraft fly close to Taiwan, island's defence ministry says

Lawrence Chung

South China Morning Post, January 23, 2020

A group of military aircraft from mainland China flew close to the southernmost tip of Taiwan on Thursday, just a week after President Tsai Ing-wen angered Beijing by saying the island was an independent country. According to Taiwan's defence ministry, the formation, which included a KJ-500 early warning and control aircraft and an H-6 bomber, passed through the Bashi Channel near Taiwan's Orchid Island en route to the western Pacific Ocean. It did not say how many aircraft were involved but said they had taken off from different airbases in southern China.

"They returned to their airbases from their morning flight path after a long-haul exercise," the ministry said in a statement. The ministry urged the public not to be alarmed by the aircraft's presence, saying it constantly monitored the activities of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), both in the air and at sea. Taiwan's armed forces would also remain on high alert over the Lunar.

The PLA exercise came just a week after Tsai said on January 15 that Beijing needed to face the reality of Taiwan's independence. "We don't have a need to declare ourselves an independent state," she said in an interview with the BBC. "We are an independent country already and we call ourselves the Republic of China, Taiwan." Tsai's comments came just days after she secured a second term as president with a record 8.2 million votes. In her victory speech, she promised to continue to stand up to Beijing's intimidation, while also strengthening Taiwan's defences, partly by developing more home-grown military equipment, including submarines. In response to Tsai's "independent country" comments, Ma Xiaoguang, a spokesman for the mainland's Taiwan Affairs

Office, said: “We firmly attack and counter various forms of Taiwan independence and separatist activities to maintain overall peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait.”

Beijing regards Taiwan as part of its territory awaiting reunification, by force if necessary. Official ties between the two sides have been suspended since Tsai took office in 2016 and refused to accept the one-China principle – the political understanding that there is only one China with ambiguity over whether it is governed by Taipei or Beijing. Over the past four years Beijing has ramped up the pressure on the island, by poaching its diplomatic allies and staging military drills. Taiwanese Minister of National Defence Yen Te-fa said earlier that the mainland staged about 2,000 bomber patrols a year near the Taiwan Strait. For their part, Taiwan’s army and air force last week gave two demonstrations of their readiness to defend the island against attack.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3047372/chinese-military-aircraft-fly-close-taiwan-islands-defence>

China says it has ‘no intention’ of joining arms talks with US and Russia

South China Morning Post, January 22, 2020

China on Wednesday said it had “no intention to participate” in trilateral arms control negotiations, a day after Washington called on Beijing to join its nuclear arms talks with Moscow. The United States has held two rounds of talks with Russia, aimed at reducing misunderstandings around critical security issues since the collapse of a Cold War nuclear pact last year, which triggered fears of a new arms race. Washington has hinted that Beijing should also join the discussions.

But Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang accused the US of using China’s involvement as “a pretext to shirk and shift its own nuclear disarmament responsibilities”.

“China has no intention to participate in the so-called China-US-Russia trilateral arms control negotiations,” Geng said at a regular press briefing in Beijing. Washington has warned about a lack of transparency around China’s growing nuclear arsenal, and US President Donald Trump has insisted that any new disarmament pact would need China to come on board. Geng said that “the country with the largest and most advanced weapons arsenal in the world should earnestly fulfil its special responsibilities for nuclear disarmament,” referring to the US.

According to Robert Wood, US ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, China’s nuclear stockpile is expected to double over the next decade. “We have to deal with this serious threat to strategic stability, which is the lack of transparency around China’s nuclear stockpile enhancement,” he said on Tuesday. Washington and Moscow walked away from the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces treaty in August last year, after each accused the other of violating the terms of the deal.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3047220/china-says-it-has-no-intention-joining-arms-talks-us-and-russia>

Chinese military enthusiasts expect new warplanes in 2020

Liu Xuanzun

Global Times, January 22, 2020

Chinese military enthusiasts online are eagerly expecting new, homemade warplanes to debut in 2020, naming the next-generation aircraft carrier-based fighter jet and the carrier-based early warning aircraft as their top wishes. They also hope to see domestically developed aero engines finally equipped on J-20 stealth fighter jets. The internet users' appetite was whetted by a statement from the state-owned Aviation Industry Corporation of China (AVIC) last week, in which the country's main warplane developer announced the company would develop nine types of aircraft, conduct maiden flights for four types of aircraft, and receive a production permit for one type of aircraft in 2020.

While the development plan may not be revealed to the public immediately, the maiden flights are more concrete, as the military channel of news portal Sina held a vote on its social media platform Weibo, asking military enthusiasts online which type of aircraft they would like to see. As of Wednesday, 42 percent of more than 4,000 votes went to the next-generation aircraft carrier-based fighter jet, 28 percent the carrier-based early warning aircraft and 23 percent the twin-seat variant J-20 fighter jet. While the new aircraft AVIC mentioned could include both military and civilian aircraft, China's military aviation equipment will definitely continue to see new progress in 2020, a military expert who asked not to be named told the Global Times on Wednesday.

China needs to develop a stealth-capable carrier-based fighter jet to form a complete set with the country's future aircraft carrier, air defense expert Fu Qianshao told the Global Times in a previous interview, noting details on the aircraft remain rumors. A replica of China's carrier-based early warning aircraft was spotted years ago. This type of aircraft could amplify aircraft carrier's combat capability by acting as a command center in the sky, gathering information and coordinating vessels into a stronger strike force, experts said. Photographers posted photos of a J-20, still single seat but equipped with homemade engines on Sina Weibo in late 2019, as military enthusiasts said they also wish to see this evolved version of the J-20 debut at the 2020 Airshow China, scheduled for November in Zhuhai, South China's Guangdong Province.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1177708.shtml>

China's international journal Satellite Navigation launched

Xinhua, January 21, 2020

A new English publication offering scientific research in the field of satellite navigation has just been launched by the Chinese Academy of Sciences and Springer Nature. The peer-reviewed academic journal "Satellite Navigation" is online in an open-access format, according to the joint sponsor Aerospace Information Research Institute of the CAS Tuesday.

The journal aims to report new results or progress on the theoretical techniques and applications of satellite navigation. It will publish original articles, reviews and commentaries that focus on studies such as satellite navigation signals, anti-jamming methods and time and coordinate reference systems, as well as intelligent applications. Yang Yuanxi, deputy chief designer of China's BeiDou Satellite Navigation System (BDS) and a CAS academician, is the chief editor of the journal. The editorial board has drawn more than 40 experts from countries including China, Germany, Britain, the United States and Russia. One article in the first issue displays the basic performance and future developments of the BDS by Yang and his research team.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-01/21/c_138723917.htm

Space station prototypes shipped to launch center

Zhao Lei

China Daily, January 21, 2020

Two major prototypes in China's manned space station program have been transported to the Wenchang Space Launch Center in Hainan province for prelaunch preparations, according to the China Manned Space Agency. The agency said in a statement on Monday that the arrival of the prototypes of the Chinese space station's core module and the country's new-generation manned spacecraft at the launch center meant that the construction project of the space station will soon begin. The prototypes were carried by ships from Tianjin, home to the spacecraft's manufacturing complexes, and spent about a week being transported to Hainan, it added.

The core module's prototype will take part in ground drills for the Long March 5B carrier rocket at the Wenchang center while the new manned spaceship's prototype will be launched by the rocket's debut flight from the center, the agency said, without elaborating on detailed schedules. The first Long March 5B—a variant of the country's biggest and mightiest rocket, the Long March 5—has been made and is receiving ground tests. It will be ferried from Tianjin to Hainan in February, it said. According to the agency, the space station's core module will be 16.6 meters long with a diameter of 4.2 m and will have a liftoff weight of 22.5 metric tons. As the biggest spacecraft China has ever built, it will be able to accommodate three astronauts and will be central to the

space station's operations as mission crew will live there and control the entire station from inside it. The module will also be capable of hosting scientific experiments.

<https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202001/22/WS5e27f1eea310128217272cdd.html>

China starts 2020 military conscription of female soldiers

China Daily, January, 21, 2020

China has started this year's military recruitment of female soldiers, mainly among college students, according to the Ministry of National Defense. China has changed its military conscription from once a year to twice a year, starting from 2020. This year's first recruitment of female soldiers ends on Feb. 15, mainly targeting college graduates and students. The second will run from June 26 to Aug. 15, mainly recruiting female students with high school degrees or above. Recruits will join the army on March 1 and Sept. 1 respectively. The recruitment includes procedures of signing up, physical examination and political assessment. Family members of martyrs and soldiers would be given priority.

http://eng.mod.gov.cn/news/2020-01/22/content_4858943.htm

Xi signs order for issuing trial regulation on military supervision work

Xinhua, January 20, 2020

Xi Jinping, chairman of the Central Military Commission, has signed an order for releasing the trial regulation on military supervision work. The regulation will take effect on Feb. 1, 2020, according to a statement released on Monday. The regulation was introduced to establish an authoritative and efficient military supervision system with complete coverage under a unified command. It is of great significance to further strengthening supervision over the exercise of power and advancing the anti-graft campaign in the military, the statement said. The 62-article regulation has specified works including the setup of supervisory commissions, their main duties and the supervision on the commissions and inspectors.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1177397.shtml>

Xi replies to letter from military's "hard-boned sixth company"

Global Times, January 20, 2020

President Xi Jinping has encouraged the officers and soldiers of a company of the 74th Group Army of the Chinese People's Liberation Army to carry forward their fighting spirit and build a strong military unit. Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, made the remarks when answering a letter from the company known as the "hard-boned sixth company" Saturday. Xi urged the entire company to pass on their "red genes" and hone their capabilities to win wars. He also extended Chinese New Year's greetings to them and their families. A heroic military unit, the company was conferred the honorary title of "hard-boned sixth company" by the Ministry of National Defense in 1964.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1177392.shtml>

Air Force reveals J-20 combat formation

Liu Xuanzun

Global Times, January 20, 2020

The “three musketeers of the sky” – the J-20, J-16 and J-10C – fly in formation in a real-combat scenario training session. Photo: Screenshot from China Central Television. China's most advanced J-20 stealth fighter jets assigned to an ace unit have been conducting real-combat scenario training together with powerful J-16 and agile J-10C jets, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Air Force revealed, as a Chinese expert said Monday the combination can conjure a kaleidoscope of tactics to safeguard the country. In a video released Sunday that celebrates the upcoming Spring Festival, the PLA Air Force showed the first scenes of J-20 fighter jets of the Wang Hai Air Group conducting real-combat scenario training.

This is an indication that the J-20 jets are making smooth progress in the air force, as their service has entered a new stage of comprehensive combat capability, military experts said. The video also showed for the first time the J-20, J-16 and J-10C, dubbed the "three musketeers of the sky," taking off and conducting real-combat scenario training together. Two J-20s, two J-16s and one J-10C formed a combat formation, according to the video. The combination of one J-20, one J-16 and one J-10C was tested in 2018, China Central Television (CCTV) reported then.

Air defense expert Fu Qianshao told the Global Times on Monday that the air force has been exploring tactics with the J-20 and other fighter jets in previous mock competitive training and has gained some experience in acquiring air superiority, land attack and sea attack. While the J-20 is more advanced than the J-16 and J-10C, they share advanced technologies like avionics and active electronically scanned array radars, according to Fu. The J-16, the least stealthy of the three, can lead an attack and openly use radar to detect targets and attract enemy attention, while the stealthy J-20s can lurk nearby and launch surprise missile attacks when hostile targets engage the J-16, Fu

said, noting that the J-10C, when equipped with the domestically developed thrust vector control engine, will excel at close-quarters dogfights thanks to super maneuverability.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1177443.shtml>

China owns largest number of nuclear power units under construction in the world

People's Daily Online, January 17, 2020

By the end of 2019, there were 11 nuclear power units under construction in Chinese mainland, representing the largest number of nuclear power units under construction in the world, and 47 nuclear power units operating safely and stably, ranking third in the world. Since the birth of China's nuclear industry on Jan.15, 1955, when the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China made the strategic decision to develop nuclear energy in China, the country has accumulated enormous experience in such areas as reactor research and development, nuclear power station design, equipment manufacturing, engineering construction, as well as operation and management of nuclear power units, with the country's capacity in certain areas reaching leading levels in the world.

According to the press conference held by China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC) on Wednesday to commemorate the 65th anniversary of the birth of China's nuclear industry, CNNC has built five nuclear power bases in China, with its commercial nuclear power units amounting to 21, and 6 nuclear power units currently under construction. CNNC's nuclear power units generated about 136.2 billion kilowatt hours of electricity in 2019, and accumulatively about 969.1 billion kilowatt hours, helping save the world from the consumption of about 390 million tons of standard coal, which would have added about 966.1 million tons of carbon dioxide and about 29.1 million tons of sulfur dioxide into the atmosphere.

The ecological benefit of the electricity generated by CNNC's nuclear power units over these years is also equivalent to that of 2.6 million hectares of trees. China has never had a level-2 or worse nuclear incident in the 65-year history of its nuclear industry. The country has maintained a great safety record of its nuclear materials, characterized by the slogan "not one gram lost and not one piece missing". As one of the global leaders in industrial security, China's experience and achievements in the nuclear industry has contributed significantly to the development of the global nuclear industry.

<http://en.people.cn/n3/2020/0117/c90000-9649630.html>

