

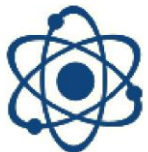
Weekly Dispatch

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# SYLLOGE ON CHINA

Focus: Nuclear, Space, Missiles and other Security Issues

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INDIAN PUGWASH SOCIETY



INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE  
STUDIES & ANALYSES  
रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

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## **China and Vietnam ‘likely to clash again’ as they build maritime militias**

Kristin Huang

South China Morning Post, April, 12, 2020

Vietnamese fishing boat sank last week after colliding with Chinese coastguard ship, as neighbours report seeing more Chinese vessels. Use of state-supported fishing militias in the disputed South China Sea can facilitate force without necessarily sparking a military response, experts say. China and Vietnam have both been building up paramilitary forces and fishing fleets to stake claims in the disputed South China Sea, according to observers, who warn that the neighbours risk further clashes there after the sinking of a Vietnamese fishing boat last week.

While Beijing continues its assertive tactics to try to control more waterways in defiance of regional and international opinion, Hanoi is responding but has far fewer boats, analysts said.

The assessment came after a Chinese coastguard ship and a Vietnamese fishing vessel collided near the Parcel Islands on April 2, with each side claiming their ship had been rammed by the other. The two countries are embroiled in a long-lasting maritime dispute over claims to part of the South China Sea, and often run into fishing disputes. Beijing claims almost all of the South China Sea as its territory and has built artificial islands with military-capable facilities over reefs and outcrops in the area, which are also claimed in part by Vietnam.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3079436/china-and-vietnam-likely-clash-again-they-build-maritime>

## **China delivering safety components needed by ‘artificial sun’ project**

Global Times, April 12, 2020

The "artificial sun" project has made significant strides as the first batch of its safety components have been successfully delivered by China and is now on its way to France, the China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC) said. According to the notice, the delivered components were pipelines for the gas injection system. The component plays an important role in the ignition, maintenance and control of the plasma, and can also play a part in the cleaning of the vacuum vessel wall. The construction of the pipeline requires extremely high manufacturing standards. The pipelines are expected to arrive in France in mid-May despite the coronavirus, Zhang Kai, chairman of the China Nuclear Industry 23 Construction Co, a subsidiary of CNNC, said in a report by China Radio International.

Apart from the safety components, progress has also been made on the construction of the Tokamak Assembly, which is a core part of the project. CNNC signed the Tokamak Assembly Contract 1 (TAC1) in 2019, and it was the biggest nuclear energy project contract bid by a Chinese company in the European market, according to a statement by CNNC. The artificial sun project,

formally known as the international thermonuclear experimental reactor (ITER) project, is the development of a nuclear fusion reactor that is expected to generate clean energy through fusion technology. The reactor is located in Provence, southern France. An experimental reactor is expected to open in 2021, and large scale commercial use will commence around 2050, according to the schedule.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1185355.shtml>

### **Aircraft carrier group's voyage shows PLA Navy's great job in virus control: expert**

Liu Xuanzun

Global Times, April 12, 2020

A Chinese naval flotilla led by an aircraft carrier reportedly sailed through the Miyako Strait and headed toward the Pacific Ocean, prompting Chinese military experts to say on Sunday that the fleet demonstrated success in novel coronavirus (COVID-19) epidemic control work. The Chinese flotilla, consisting of the Liaoning aircraft carrier, two Type 052D guided missile destroyers, two Type 054A guided missile frigates and one Type 901 auxiliary supply ship, was spotted during transit through the Miyako Strait on Friday evening, according to a statement the Japanese Defense Ministry publicly released on Saturday. The Chinese warships were headed in the direction of the Pacific Ocean, the statement said.

In line with the Japanese report, media on the island of Taiwan reported Saturday that the Liaoning carrier group was spotted in waters east of the island. The Chinese mainland military has yet to announce the operation. There was nothing strange about the Liaoning and other warships reportedly conducting regular routine exercises on Friday, Xu Guangyu, a senior adviser to the China Arms Control and Disarmament Association, told the Global Times on Sunday.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1185360.shtml>

### **Taiwan scrambles warships as PLA Navy aircraft carrier strike group heads for the Pacific**

Liu Zhen

South China Morning Post, April 12, 2020

Liaoning, accompanied by two destroyers, two frigates and a combat support ship spotted by Japan as it passes through the Miyako Strait on Saturday evening. Carrier is the only ship of its kind still operational in the region after USS Theodore Roosevelt and USS Ronald Reagan are forced to dock after crew are hit by Covid-19

Taiwan scrambled warships on Saturday night to monitor the movements of a mainland Chinese carrier strike group after it was spotted by Japan heading towards the western Pacific. The fleet,

led by China's first aircraft carrier, the Liaoning, was seen passing through the Miyako Strait near Okinawa, and then turning south, the Japanese Ministry of Defence said. Although the precise location or heading of the group was unknown, the Taiwanese navy scrambled ships from the northeastern port of Suao to monitor the situation, the island's defence ministry said.

The Miyako Strait is about 330km (205 miles) due east of the northernmost tip of Taiwan.

"We have conducted reconnaissance and monitoring over the sea and air space around Taiwan," ministry spokesman Shih Shun-wen said. To the Taiwanese public, he added: "Please be reassured." As tensions continue to simmer between Beijing and Taipei, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) has increased its activities around the self-ruled island, which the mainland regards as part of its territory awaiting reunification.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3079546/taiwan-scrambles-warships-pla-navy-aircraft-carrier-strike>

### **Guidelines on military inspections released**

China Military Online, April 12, 2020

With the approval of the Central Military Commission (CMC), the CMC General Office released guidelines on military inspections recently. The document aims to ensure the Party practices strict self-governance, the military is governed with strict discipline in every respect and the armed forces effectively complete their missions in the new era. Covering 13 items in five aspects, it puts forward the guiding ideology and basic principles for carrying out military inspections. It also clearly defines the institutional structure of inspection agencies and the building of inspection teams and standardizes the scope, target and contents of inspections. The guidelines focus on promoting the in-depth development of inspection work, extend inspections to the grassroots level, and form a coordinated supervision pattern of discipline inspections.

[http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2020-04/12/content\\_9789950.htm](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2020-04/12/content_9789950.htm)

### **Chinese PLA holds 'regular' drills near Taiwan in preparation for military struggle: experts**

Liu Xuanzun

Global Times, April 12, 2020

The Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) reportedly held military drills featuring warplanes near the island of Taiwan on Friday, and such drills, having taken place at least four times since the traditional Spring Festival holiday in January, have become regular and are now a part of military struggle preparations against the island, mainland experts said on Friday. Multiple PLA warplanes, including the H-6 bombers, KJ-500 early warning aircraft and J-11 fighter jets, conducted a far-sea long-range drill above southwestern waters near the island of Taiwan on Friday, Taiwan media reported on Friday, citing the island's defense authority. The PLA warplanes

entered the Western Pacific Ocean through the Bashi Channel, then returned to base along the same route they came from, reports from the island said.

Song Zhongping, a mainland military expert and TV commentator, told the Global Times on Friday that the drills were a part of preparations for the potential military struggle against the island of Taiwan, and such drills have become regular and routine. After the traditional Spring Festival holiday in late January, the PLA conducted a combat-readiness patrol mission featuring warships and warplanes on February 9, joint exercises on February 10, and "rare" warplane nighttime exercises on March 16, all near the island of Taiwan, despite the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1185230.shtml>

### **China-made VT-4 MBT delivered to Nigeria**

Wang Shichun

China Military Online, April 10, 2020

The first batch of 17 military vehicles consisting of VT-4 main battle tanks (MBT), ST-1 wheeled tank destroyer and two types of self-propelled howitzers bought by the Nigerian Army (NA) from the China North Industries Corporation (NORINCO) arrived at the Apapa Ports on April 8, 2020. The NA made this emergency purchase to strike Boko Haram Terrorists (BHTs) in northern Nigeria.

The VT-4 MBT is a third-generation main battle tank built by the NORINCO for export. It uses CH1000B hydro-mechanical drive system, 125 mm smoothbore gun, FY-4 reactive armor, and 1,300hp engine. The tank has strong maneuverability, good protection performance, and strong firepower. It has been exported to Thailand and won recognition of the Thai Royal Army. The NA's Chief of Policy and Plans (CPPLANS) Lieutenant General Lamidi Adeosun said that Nigeria and the NORINCO signed a package contract last year. Nigeria has become the first country in the region to own advanced tanks and is now fully prepared for the use and maintenance of the vehicles. The Nigerian soldiers who will operate the tanks have been trained in China. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chinese instructors who originally planned to travel to Nigeria for further operation training are yet to be put into place for the time being.

[http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2020-04/10/content\\_9789120.htm](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2020-04/10/content_9789120.htm)

### **Satellite lost as rocket launch fails**

Zhao Lei

China Daily, April 9, 2020

The attempted launch of one of China's Long March 3B carrier rockets failed on Thursday evening, resulting in the loss of a communications satellite that the country built for Indonesia, Xinhua News Agency has reported.

The report said the rocket blasted off at 7:46 pm from the Xichang Satellite Launch Center in Sichuan province and had technical problems during its third stage before falling back to Earth. The satellite – PALAPA-N1 – was developed by the China Academy of Space Technology in Beijing to replace the PALAPA-D that was launched by a Long March 3B from the Xichang center in 2009. It was expected to provide broadcasting and broadband internet services across Indonesia.

<https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202004/09/WS5e8f31f3a3105d50a3d151c8.html>

### **Sea test this year for China's new 'skiing' plane after coronavirus delay: reports**

Liu Zhen

South China Morning Post, April 8, 2020

China is making up for time lost during the coronavirus outbreak by resuming preparations to test its largest amphibious aeroplane, which will be able to cover all of the South China Sea, state media has reported. The prototype of AG600 "Kunlong" amphibious aircraft is being worked on in Jingmen – in the outbreak's initial epicentre of Hubei province – and will have its maiden maritime flight later this year from Zhuhai, neighbouring Hong Kong, China Central Television (CCTV) reported.

The project had been suspended for over a month due to the Covid-19 epidemic in Hubei, and the prototype plane was at risk of damage without maintenance. Aviation Industry Corporation of China (AVIC) sent a reinforcement team to Hubei in mid-March, during the province's lockdown, to start preparing for tests of the plane, according to CCTV. The developers in AVIC's Hubei subsidiaries have now resumed working at full capacity. "Now the plane is in good condition," Lu Yang, deputy head of the AG600 project at the Jingmen site, told CCTV. "We are all working overtime and making up for the lost time. I believe this [sea-based trial] can be done within this year. No problem."

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3079044/chinas-new-skiing-plane-have-sea-test-year-after-coronavirus>

China to launch last satellite for BeiDou navigation system in May

Xinhua, April 6, 2020

China is expected to launch the last satellite for its BeiDou-3 Navigation Satellite System in May from the Xichang Satellite Launch Center in southwest China's Sichuan Province. The new

satellite is the 55th satellite of the BeiDou Navigation Satellite System. It arrived at the launch site in Xichang on April 4, where it will be tested, assembled and fueled before the launch. The BDS family satellite is a geosynchronous earth orbit satellite. The BDS is China's independently developed and operated global satellite navigation system. China started to build the BeiDou-3 Navigation Satellite System in 2009. The launch of the 55th satellite represents the completion of the system.

[http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-04/06/c\\_138951001.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-04/06/c_138951001.htm)

### **China develops fighter jet for training new generation of aircraft carrier pilots**

Minnie Chan

South China Morning Post, April 5, 2020

Chinese engineers have modified an old fighter jet to create a training aircraft for pilots who will serve on the country's newest aircraft carrier – the Type 002 – which is currently in development, according to the plane's manufacturer. The adapted JL-9 – also known as the FTC-2000 Mountain Eagle or “Shanying” – was produced by Guizhou Aircraft Industry Corporation (GAIC) specifically for use on the Type 002, which will have a catapult launch system, Beijing-based naval expert Li Jie said. Although he would not be drawn on when he thought the new carrier might be ready to take to the sea, Li said it would take “at least two to three years” to train the fighter pilots that would serve on it.

GAIC, which is a subsidiary of Aviation Industry Corporation of China (AVIC), said last month that the naval version of the JL-9 had been completed, and published artists' impressions of how the jet and carrier would look together. Unlike China's two active aircraft carriers – the Liaoning and the Shandong – which use a ski-jump launch system for the J-15 jets they carry, the Type 002 will be fitted with an electromagnetic catapult similar to that used on the USS Gerald Ford. While the construction of the Type 002 began in 2018 and is expected to be completed next year, it is not yet known when it will be ready to put to sea.

China said earlier it planned to have at least four aircraft carrier strike groups by 2030, which would require 200 aircraft – including fighter jets, helicopters and assorted surveillance planes – and about 500 pilots.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3078461/china-develops-fighter-jet-training-new-generation-aircraft>