

September 17, 2020

SYLLOGE ON CHINA

Focus: Nuclear, Space, Missiles and other Security Issues

An Initiative by Indian Pugwash Society and Centre for Nuclear Issues and Arms Control
(MP - IDSA)



INDIAN PUGWASH SOCIETY



Prepared By: Diya Deep Singh

China-India border dispute: there may be a five-point plan but is it enough to bridge differences?

Matt Ho

South China Morning Post, September 17, 2020

When the foreign ministers of China and India emerged from their meeting in Moscow last week, there was a sense of relief. Wang Yi and his Indian counterpart Subrahmanyam Jaishankar said their 2½-hour discussion had yielded a five-point plan to ease the worst border crisis between the two countries in decades. It seemed like there was the start of a way out of clashes that had already claimed the lives of at least 20 Indian soldiers and involved gunfire. But their differences re-emerged almost immediately.

For decades the two sides have agreed that economic issues should be separate from the dispute but now China sees India muddying that understanding with sanctions against Chinese firms and technologies. At the same time, India sees China as raising the stakes by moving more troops into an area that was previously largely considered a no man's land. At the diplomatic level, the two sides appear to be in agreement. Chinese ambassador to India Sun Weidong said that whenever the situation gets difficult, "it is all the more important to ensure the stability of the overall relationship and preserve mutual trust." The next day, Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh told the Indian parliament that both countries resolved to keep peace and tranquillity along their border. But Singh also said that they had not been able to find a mutually acceptable solution and New Delhi had doubled its budget in recent years for strategic roads along the border to match Chinese infrastructure on the other side. Observers said mutual suspicion from China and India, the rise of nationalism in both countries and rapidly changing regional geopolitics have cast a shadow over efforts by Beijing and New Delhi to reach an agreement and rebuild trust.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3101815/china-india-border-dispute-there-may-be-five-point-plan-it>

Long March rocket sends 9 satellites into orbit from sea

China Daily, September 16, 2020

China launched nine satellites on Tuesday with a Long March 11 solid-propellant carrier rocket that blasted off from a ship in the Yellow Sea, achieving the country's first commercial launch at sea. Developed by Changguang Satellite Technology in Changchun, Jilin province, these satellites, each weighing about 42 kilograms, are tasked with providing remote-sensing products to users in industries such as agriculture, forestry, land resources and environmental protection.

The Long March 11's first launch from a ship took place in the Yellow Sea in June 2019 and put seven satellites into orbit. It was China's first space mission launched at sea. That mission was more experimental than commercial as its major task was to test and verify seaborne launch technologies and equipment rather than serve a commercial purpose, said Jin Xin, the rocket's deputy project manager. Therefore, Tuesday's launch should be seen as the rocket's, and China's, first sea-based commercial flight operation, he noted. In addition to its commercial purpose, the mission also helped to optimize seaborne launch procedures and improve the safety and reliability of those operations, paving the way for future sea-based launches that will be conducted frequently, Jin said. The rocket has so far performed 10 launches – eight from launch centers on land and two from ships – that successfully placed 51 satellites into orbit. Designers have started to develop an upgraded variant of the Long March 11, which will be more powerful than the existing model, project managers said.

The new type will be able to send a 2-ton satellite into low orbit. It is expected to perform its first launch at sea around 2022, they said. China is now the only nation that is independently able to conduct sea-based space launches.

http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2020-09/16/content_9903603.htm

Seaborne rocket launches key to future of China's space programme, experts say

Minnie Chan

South China Morning Post, September 16, 2020

Seaborne rocket launches like the one that shot nine satellites into orbit on Tuesday are set to become a major feature of China's space programme as it seeks to keep pace with the United States and industry leaders like SpaceX, experts said. Chinese state newspaper Global Times reported that a Long March-11 rocket carrying new satellites for the Jilin-1 remote sensing constellation lifted off from a floating platform in the Yellow Sea on Tuesday morning. Observers said the development of a seaborne version of the Long March rocket was in line with industry trends, as borne out by SpaceX's chief executive Elon Musk, who said in June the company planned to build more ports to accommodate them.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3101819/seaborne-rocket-launches-key-future-chinas-space-programme>

China-India border dispute: PLA raised combat readiness after exchange of gunfire, sources say

Minnie Chan

South China Morning Post, September 16, 2020

Chinese troops on the country's disputed border with India raised their combat readiness to the second-highest possible last week after an exchange of gunfire, but the alert was lowered after a meeting of the nations' foreign ministers, military sources said. The increase, to second level, meant more weapons and troops were deployed to the front line, and training exercises were ramped up for commanders, officers and soldiers, a military source told the South China Morning Post. The last time such a high level was employed by troops in the restive region was in 1987, when a skirmish in the Sumdorong Chu valley pushed the two sides to the brink of war, said the person, who asked not to be named. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) has four grades of combat readiness. The first level is used only when military leaders are convinced an armed conflict is inevitable.

The PLA's Central Theatre Command said on Weibo on September 8 – the day after the exchange of gunfire – that they had received orders to deploy more weapons and troops to the plateau, and begin a series of physical and technical exercises. “Since the combat readiness level was raised, commanders, officers and soldiers have been working around the clock, carrying out extra training and drills,” the source said. “The PLA mobilised more troops and weapons systems to the Line of Actual Control [the formal name for the disputed China-India border] in preparation for the worst.”

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3101663/china-india-border-dispute-pla-raised-combat-readiness-after>

China air force plays up J-20 stealth strength as Taiwan tensions brew

Liu Zhen

The Chinese military has highlighted advances in stealth jet technology as tensions rise with Taiwan, reporting record results in a simulated combat exercise. The PLA Daily, the official newspaper of the People's Liberation Army, reported on Monday that a junior pilot in a J-20 stealth fighter "shot down" 17 enemy planes without taking any "hits" in the simulation exercise. According to the report, the pilot, Chen Xinhao, had just 100 hours in the J-20 and is from the PLA Air Force's elite Wang Hai Unit under the Eastern Theatre Command, which would spearhead any military campaign in a conflict with Taiwan. Chen and his wingmen challenged "multiple waves of enemy planes from different directions" and knocked down a total of 17 with "0 damage" on his side, the report said. The report did specify the opponents in the exercise but three J-16 multirole fighters were also pictured in the report. Beijing views Taiwan as a breakaway province to be reunified with the mainland by force if necessary, and tensions have risen between the two in recent years, with the PLA mounting regular air patrols around the self-ruled island.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3101662/china-air-force-plays-j-20-stealth-strength-taiwan-tensions>

Chinese military launches campaign on cybersecurity

Xinhua, September 14, 2020

The Chinese military on Monday kicked off its maiden campaign aimed at raising awareness on cybersecurity. The campaign, slated to last until Sunday, highlighted the need to gain cutting-edge knowledge of network technology development, as well as learn theories and basic skills related to network security. It also urged a profound understanding of risks and challenges in the field. Combining online and offline activities, the campaign aims at creating a favorable cyberspace environment for strengthening and revitalizing the armed forces, as well as advancing military preparedness.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-09/14/c_139367488.htm

China firmly opposes U.S. report on Chinese military: defense spokesman

Xinhua, September 13, 2020

A Chinese defense spokesman on Sunday expressed firm opposition to a recent report released by the U.S. Department of Defense. Wu Qian, a spokesman for the Ministry of National Defense, said the report titled "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2020" is further proof of the U.S. intent to smear China and its military. China deplores and firmly opposes the action by the U.S. side, Wu said. The report deliberately distorted relations between the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the Chinese military, misinterpreted China's national defense policy and military strategies, and hyped up the so-called "Chinese military threat," Wu said. The U.S. side issued such reports in the past 20 consecutive years, Wu said, describing it as a blatant act of hegemony and provocation that has severely hurt bilateral and military-to-military relations. China has lodged stern representations with the U.S. side, Wu added.

China follows the path of peaceful development and adheres to a national defense policy that is defensive in nature, said Wu, adding that China's military development is aimed at safeguarding the country's sovereignty, security and development interests. "It does not target any country, nor does it pose a threat to any other country," Wu said. Wu reiterated that there is only one China in the world, and Taiwan is an inalienable part of China. Wu said the Chinese military will faithfully put to practice the vision of building a community with

a shared future for humanity, firmly safeguard the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, actively take part in regional security cooperation, and promptly provide international public security goods. "The Chinese military is committed to safeguarding world peace, contributing to global development, and upholding international order," Wu said.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-09/13/c_139365363.htm

China lodges representation over Pentagon report on China's military development

Global Times, September 13, 2020

China has lodged stern representation to the US after the US Department of Defense released the 2020 report on China's military and security developments, another example of the US defaming China's national defense and military modernization, the Chinese Ministry of National Defense said Sunday. The Pentagon statement, released on September 2, recklessly distorts the relationship between the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the Chinese military, misinterprets China's national defense policies and military strategies, hypes the "China military threat theory," voices false opinions on China's national defense and developments in military modernization, and groundlessly makes accusations against China on questions including those on defense expenditure, nuclear policy and Taiwan, said Defense Ministry spokesperson Wu Qian in a statement.

It is a pure act of hegemony and provocation that the US has released similar reports over the past 20 years, and it has seriously damaged relations between the two countries and their militaries, Wu said. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) is the people's army led by the CPC, and the Constitution of the People's Republic of China clearly states the most essential characteristic of socialism with Chinese characteristics is the leadership of the CPC, Wu said, noting that the armed forces of China belong to the people, and the people's army will stick to the absolute leadership of the Party. The PLA's mission has always been serving the people, as it has made huge sacrifices in realizing the nation's independence and the people's liberation, and made significant contributions in economic development, dealing with major natural disasters and safeguarding the people's lives and property, the spokesperson said.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1200752.shtml>

Closer China, EU partnership sets pace for stability, prosperity

Li Hong

Global Times, September 13, 2020

As respected partners, China and the European Union (EU) share a common responsibility to resolutely support free trade, multilateral cooperation and Euro-Asian continental economic integration - bedrocks for the prosperity and peace of billions of people across this enormous landmass. The China-Germany-EU leaders' summit scheduled on Monday will become a pace-setting moment. Facing an increasingly volatile world and the unpredictable US presidential election in November, China and the EU, as two prime forces of stability and drivers of economic growth, need to jointly oppose US unilateralism, economic nationalism and political coercion in dealing with affairs of global importance.

An old Chinese idiom says that friends in need are friends indeed. The EU and China ought to support each other persistently in order to uphold a multipolar world order, and to diminish the American unipolar domination. Whether it be the Nord Stream-II pipeline project transporting over 50 billion cubic meters of

natural gas annually from Russia to Germany and other EU countries, the world-leading ultrafast wireless 5G innovated by China's Huawei Technologies, or the landmark Iran nuclear accord which was reached after arduous "six-partite" talks over many years, China and the EU should continuously support one another, and say "no" to the reckless attacks and long-arm jurisdictional sanctions of the Trump administration.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1200692.shtml>

China invites public contributions to military technological innovation

MOD, September 13, 2020

The Chinese military has introduced a monthly one-day event to hear suggestions from the civilian sector concerning military technological innovation, the Science and Technology Commission (STC) of the Central Military Commission said. The first such event was held on Saturday, gathering 44 participants from universities, research institutes and high-tech firms, said the STC. Since the STC released the monthly event schedule in July, 755 scientific research teams have signed up and submitted national defense innovation ideas, it added.

http://eng.mod.gov.cn/news/2020-09/13/content_4871149.htm

Will China upgrade its destroyers with ‘carrier killer’ missiles?

Liu Zhen

China's Type 055 guided-missile destroyers have the potential to be refitted with "aircraft carrier killer" missiles but the weapons would have to be lighter and smaller than existing land-based technology, observers said. The assessment comes as the military nears the end of another phase in its massive naval expansion programme. The eighth and final Type 055 was launched in Dalian, Liaoning province, at the end of last month, meaning that its structure is complete and it is in the process of being fitted with equipment. The first in the series has been commissioned and the others are also being fitted out. The 12,000-tonne warship is considered the one of the world's most powerful multi-role surface combat ships, because it can be fitted with various armaments including anti-ship cruise missiles, surface-to-air missiles, anti-submarine weapons and land-attack cruise missiles.

But there has been speculation that future destroyers could be upgraded to a new "Type 055A" variant or even an entire new class produced capable of firing "carrier killers". According to an analysis by US-based Military Watch Magazine, one possibility is upgrading the power system into an integrated fully electric propulsion system, enabling high-energy weapons like laser or electromagnetic guns. The People's Liberation Army already has "carrier killers" in its arsenal but these are part of the heavy land-based Dongfeng (DF) range. Two of these missiles – the DF-21D and DF-26B – were fired by the PLA Rocket Force from the Chinese mainland into the South China Sea last month. The Rocket Force also has the DF-17, the world's first hypersonic glide missile in service. There have been no reports of these land-based missiles being adapted for use by the PLA Navy, although the Pentagon's 2020 China military power report said that when operational, the Type 055 would carry anti-ship ballistic missiles.

Naval expert Li Jie said it was unlikely that these types of anti-ship ballistic missiles had already been fitted on the Type 055 vessels. Li said the DF series missiles were too big for ships, but it would be possible to integrate hypersonic anti-ship cruise missiles similar to the Russian Zircons into the Chinese destroyers. "If the ships were loaded with advanced anti-ship missiles, the PLA's ability to deny access to an area would be

much greater,” he said. Military analyst Zhou Chenming said the PLA Navy was unlikely to rush into building a new series of ships, opting instead to focus on refining the operations on board the new larger and more modern vessels and fine-tuning their coordination with a bigger fleet. “I believe that in the next 10 years the pace of the shipbuilding will slow, and there will more likely be changes to existing types,” Zhou said. “If anything, the research and development on next-generation technologies will continue, but the applications will be less radical.”

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3101244/will-china-upgrade-its-destroyers-carrier-killer-missiles>

Xi urges optimizing scientific resources to advance progress

China Military Online, September 12, 2020

President Xi Jinping on Friday underlined the need to integrate and optimize the country's scientific and technological resources, and called for building up some national-level laboratories in order to make new progress in core technologies in critical areas. After hearing some scientists' suggestions, Xi said the country needs more scientific and technological solutions than ever before in order to promote socioeconomic development and improve people's livelihoods. He said scientific and technological development must target global science frontiers, serve the country's economic growth and other significant needs and benefit people's lives and health. Innovation, as the primary driving force for scientific and technological development, must be strengthened, he added. Promoting high-quality development, meeting people's aspirations for a better life, building the new development pattern in response to changes in the domestic and international situation and comprehensively modernizing the country – all call for speeding up scientific and technological innovation, Xi said.

Xi called for deepening reforms in scientific and technological systems to unleash the potential of technological innovation. He also stressed the need to strengthen international cooperation to allow the country to be involved in the global innovation network and improve its technological innovation capacity via opening-up. He called on scientific and technological workers to be bold in proposing new theories, exploring new areas and working out more high-level creative outcomes. Efforts also should be made to guide children in acquiring scientific knowledge and help them to become interested in science and technology, Xi said. He urged Party and government officials at various levels to honestly implement the policies and decisions made by the CPC Central Committee, faithfully carry out the innovation-driven development strategy and strive to turn technological results into productivity. Leading officials should keep updating their knowledge and have a good understanding of the development trend of global science and technology, Xi said.

http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2020-09/12/content_9901639.htm

China tests drones, new rocket launcher near disputed India border area

William Zheng

Official media reports say new technology deployed to meet challenges of high-altitude warfare, China is deploying more advanced technology to overcome the challenges of high-altitude warfare and shorten supply lines for troops on the country's contested border with India. According to state media, the People's Liberation Army has been testing various new weapons, including a new infantry rocket launcher with upgraded anti-tank

and anti-bunker capacity. The rocket launcher was tested at “an average altitude of more than 4,000 metres (13,100 feet)” in a live-fire drill by a unit from the 77th Group Army under the PLA’s Western Theatre Command, according to a report on China Central Television on Sunday.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3101193/china-tests-drones-new-rocket-launcher-near-disputed-india>

PLA Rocket Force holds AI challenge

To serve as a "touchstone" and a "training ground" for the transformation and application of innovative technological achievements, the PLA Rocket Force hosts the "Smart Rocket-Fire Eye" Artificial Intelligence Challenge from August to December, in order to promote the transformation of intelligent concepts, and help create an intelligent development ecology featuring the coordinated efforts of enterprises, universities, research institutions and consumers. The event is sponsored by the Equipment Department of the PLA Rocket Force. Participants come from relevant military industry groups, universities and research institutes inside and outside the military, private enterprises with cutting-edge and related teams in related fields. The objective of the activity is set for intelligent image detection and recognition. Through the scientific setting of competition subjects and reasonable construction of the test environment, the challenge uses multi-source data sets, carries out the performance comparison of artificial intelligence algorithms, discovers cutting-edge innovative technologies, selects innovative talents and teams, and improves image detection and recognition technology level in complex environments.

The challenge is divided into three stages, including preparation, preliminary and finals. The registration process has been started and the deadline is the end of September. The preliminary round will be completed from early October to November 20 and the finalists will be announced. After entering the final stage, the participating teams will receive relevant training before the finals. The organizing committee plans to hold special presentations in Beijing, Xi'an, Chengdu, Changsha, Shenzhen and other cities in mid-September. The specific time and location will be announced on the official registration website, WeChat official account and other platforms.

http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2020-09/11/content_9901344.htm