

October 21, 2020 - November 2, 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



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China overhauls military education, modernising troops to be ready to fight

Kristin Huang

South China Morning Post, October 21, 2020

The People's Liberation Army is revamping its education system, the latest step in China's military modernisation drive. President Xi Jinping, who is also chairman of the Central Military Commission, on Monday approved a military education guideline that outlines the new training system. While details have not been released, the guideline demands a holistic approach, combining academic studies, military and vocational training, to prepare future servicemen and women, according to a Xinhua report. It is a departure from the previous emphasis on non-combat-related aspects of training such as theoretical and political studies, which was not an effective way to prepare soldiers for a more modern Chinese force, according to Zhou Chenming, a Beijing-based military expert.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3106421/china-overhauls-military-education-modernising-troops-be-ready>

China, N.Korea stand together 'for self-protection against US hegemony' like 70 years

Global Times, October 22, 2020

As China commemorated the 70th anniversary of the Chinese People's Volunteers (CPV) army entering the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea (1950-1953), the DPRK, or North Korea, also held a solemn memorial event to express its gratitude and respect to China's contribution in the 1950s to save the country from being destroyed by the US. Chinese President Xi Jinping will attend a meeting in Beijing Friday to commemorate the anniversary. Xi will deliver an important speech at the meeting, which will be held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, the Xinhua News Agency reported.

A day ahead of the grand solemn memorial meeting in Beijing, the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported that North Korean leader Kim Jong-un paid tribute to martyrs of the Chinese People's Volunteers (CPV) army in Hoechang county, and also paid tribute to Mao Anying, the late Chinese leader Mao Zedong's eldest son, who died in the Korean War. Chinese analysts said this is a strong signal to the world that China-DPRK friendship and mutual trust remain close and solid despite external influence. The event highlights the anti-imperialism, anti-hegemony and self-defense nature of the war. This is also a strong response to some voices from the US and South Korea accusing China's military intervention that "it was an invasion of the Korean Peninsula," said Chinese analysts, because it was the US who invaded the peninsula to intervene in the civil war, and ignored a series of warnings sent by China, and insisted on crossing the 38th parallel, and extend the war to China's border.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1204390.shtml>

China steadily deepens reforms on national defense and armed forces

Zhang Kejin

China Military Online, October 22, 2020

The reform of military policies and institutions is considered as the "third major battle" in deepening reforms on national defense and armed forces, following the reform of leadership and command system and the reform of size, structure and force composition of the Chinese armed forces. In mid-November 2018, the Central Military Commission (CMC) held the working conference on reforming military policies and institutions in Beijing, kicking off this critical battle. What progress has been achieved in the "third major battle" up to now? As of mid-October this year, according to the Office for Reform and Organizational Structure of the CMC, a series of policies and systems have been promulgated, including the Communist Party of China regulations on Party building within the military, opinions on comprehensive and in-depth implementation of the CMC Chairman responsibility system and the Law on the People's Armed Police Force. The formulation of trunk policies and institutions in the areas of joint operations, military training, logistics, and armaments is underway.

It is expected to establish a basic framework for the system of socialist military policies and institutions with Chinese characteristics within this year. A list of policies and institutions in urgent need was released four days after the policies and institutions reform working conference was held. Twenty-seven policies and institutions were listed, including those on strengthening the Party organization building, selection and exchange of cadres in the organs of PLA theater commands, improvement of relevant policies on the troops stationed on plateau and islands, scientific and technological innovation incentives, the management of the employment contract of civilian personnel, the medical support of military personnel and their families, etc.. The formulation of all the policies and institutions in the list were completed within just over six months. Policies and institutions conducive to consolidating the morale and releasing the vitality of the troops have brought more sense of gain to all the officers and soldiers of the PLA in the past few years.

http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2020-10/22/content_9923198.htm

China firmly opposes U.S. arms sales to Taiwan: defense spokesperson

China Military Online, October 22, 2020

China resolutely opposes the United States selling weapons to Taiwan and urges the U.S. side to stop its military contacts with the island, said Senior Colonel Tan Kefei, a spokesperson for China's Ministry of National Defense (MND). Tan made the remarks when asked to comment on the U.S.

Department of State's newly approved plans to sell weapons worth 1.8 billion U.S. dollars to Taiwan, which was released on Wednesday by the Defense Security Cooperation Agency of the U.S. Department of Defense.

The spokesperson pointed out that the U.S. arms sales to Taiwan seriously violates the one-China principle and three China-U.S. Joint Communiques, especially the August 17 Communique, severely interferes in China's internal affairs and undermines China's sovereignty and security interests. "The move seriously damages relations between the two countries and the two militaries, as well as the peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait, China firmly opposes it," Tan said. The Taiwan question matters for China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and is vital to China's core interests, stressed Tan. "China strongly urges the U.S. side to immediately cancel the plans of selling weapons to Taiwan and cease military contact with the island and handle issues related to Taiwan prudently, so as to avoid serious consequences to Sino-American bilateral and mil-to-mil relations, as well as peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait," said the spokesperson. He added that if the U.S. side discards the basic norms of international relations, violates its commitment and acts capriciously and obstinately, China will for sure resolutely strike back.

http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2020-10/22/content_9923386.htm

China revises national defence law to enhance security

Wendy Wu

South China Morning Post, October 22, 2020

China has issued a draft revision to its national defence law as it seeks to enhance security in key areas like cyberspace, and improve communication between the government and the military. The document, which has been under deliberation for almost two years, was released by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Wednesday and will remain open for public comment until November 19. Under the draft, a "coordination mechanism" for discussing important defence matters will be established between the State Council – China's cabinet – and the Communist Party's Central Military Commission.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3106684/china-revises-national-defence-law-enhance-security>

PLA Navy conducts exercise above South China Sea

China Military Online, October 23, 2020

The naval aviation force under the People's Liberation Army Southern Theater Command conducted a large-scale live-fire exercise over the South China Sea earlier this week, according to the PLA Navy. The Navy said in a statement published on Friday on its WeChat account the

exercise was carried out by nearly 100 naval pilots above waters west of the southern island province of Hainan. Dozens of air-to-air missiles were launched during the operation, intended to test naval aviation units' combat, commanding and logistical support capabilities, it said.

Pictures published along with the statement showed at least two types of domestically developed combat aircraft – the J-11BH fighter jet and JH-7A fighter-bomber – were involved in the operation. This exercise has become the first time more than 30 aviators fired a real missile, according to the statement. The PLA has conducted a number of live-fire drills in the air and waters of the South China Sea over recent months, responding to security threats from foreign militaries.

http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2020-10/23/content_9923961.htm

China-US rivalry: PLA monitored American warplane as it flew over Taiwan, PLA source says

Kristin Huang

South China Morning Post, October 24, 2020

An American warplane was monitored by China's military as it flew over northern Taiwan this week, according to a PLA source, despite the United States denying – after first acknowledging that any such flight ever took place. The incident began when two flight tracking services – Golf9 and Tokyo Radar – reported on Twitter on Wednesday that an aircraft with the serial number 62-4134 had flown through Taipei's airspace at an altitude of 31,500 feet. Although Taiwan's air force dismissed the reports as fake news, the US Air Force on Wednesday confirmed that one of its RC-135W electronic surveillance planes had been in the area at the time of the reported sighting.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3106935/china-us-rivalry-pla-monitored-american-warplane-it-flew-over>

Treaty banning nuclear weapons to enter into force

Global Times, October 25, 2020

An international treaty banning nuclear weapons has been ratified by a 50th country, the UN said Saturday, allowing the "historic" text to enter into force after 90 days. While nuclear powers have not signed up to the treaty, activists who have pushed for its enactment hold out hope that it will nonetheless prove to be more than symbolic and have a gradual deterrent effect. Honduras became the 50th country to ratify. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called it "the culmination of a worldwide movement to draw attention to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons," according to a statement from his spokesman.

"It represents a meaningful commitment towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons, which remains the highest disarmament priority of the United Nations." NGOs also welcomed the news, including the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), a coalition that won the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize for its key role in bringing the treaty to fruition. "Honduras just ratified the Treaty as the 50th state, triggering entry into force and making history," ICAN said. Peter Maurer, president of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), said in a statement: "Today is a victory for humanity, and a promise of a safer future." The 75th anniversary of the nuclear attacks on Nagasaki and Hiroshima, marked in August, saw a wave of countries ratify the treaty. They have included Nigeria, Malaysia, Ireland, Malta and Tuvalu. Thailand, Mexico, South Africa, Bangladesh, New Zealand, Vietnam and the Vatican are among the countries that have already ratified it. It is now to enter into force on January 22, 2021, the UN said. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons - which bans the use, development, production, testing, stationing, stockpiling and threat of use of such weapons - was adopted by the UN General Assembly in July 2017 with the approval of 122 countries.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1204562.shtml>

Beijing gives cautious welcome to Vladimir Putin's hint over Russia-China military alliance

Jun Mai

South China Morning Post, October 25, 2020

Beijing has cautiously welcomed Vladimir Putin's suggestion that a military alliance between Russia and China is possible – the first time a Russian leader has made such a suggestion since the pact between Stalin and Mao Zedong collapsed. He was asked about the possibility of such an alliance during a meeting of the Valdai Discussion Club, a Russian international affairs forum, and replied: "We have always believed that our relations have reached such a level of cooperation and trust that it is not necessary, but it is certainly imaginable, in theory." He continued that the two countries' militaries already work closely together and "time will tell how it will progress from here. So far, we have not set that goal for ourselves. But, in principle, we are not going to rule it out, either. So, we will see".

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3107027/beijing-gives-cautious-welcome-vladimir-putins-hint-over>

High-tech backed militia forces take spotlight in non-war military operations

Si Lilong and Zang Chenyu

China Military Online, October 27, 2020

In a flood prevention and rescue drill held by militia detachments in central China's Hunan Province in mid October, new equipment including commanding vehicles, communication

supporting vehicles and reconnaissance drones appeared together and displayed fully their prowess , rendering the drill of a full-on “hi-tech style”.

In recent years, a large number of new-quality militia forces with multiple high-tech capabilities such as information and communication technology, surveying and mapping, navigation, as well as meteorological and oceanographic observation have been set up in different parts of China. The militia detachments equipped with science and technology have become an essential force in military operations other than war (MOOTW). In south China’s Guangdong Province, the militia network detachments in many cities select their members from local high-tech enterprises.

http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2020-10/27/content_9925961.htm

US arms sales to Taiwan 'offensive, but useless'

Yang Sheng

Global Times, October 27, 2020

The US has announced plans for a new round of arms sales to arm the secessionist Taiwan authorities with offensive Harpoon missiles that can attack the Chinese mainland, shortly after the Chinese central government announced on Monday sanctions against US military industrial firms and individuals involved in the arms sales to Taiwan. Chinese mainland experts warned that although these missiles won't be able to threaten the People's Liberation Army (PLA) effectively, this is a greater provocation than in the past, as the weapons are not for self-defense but can reach the coastal regions of the mainland. China urged the US to stop the relevant arms sales and military connections with the island, and cancel relevant arms sales plans to prevent further damage to China-US relations, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said at a routine press conference on Tuesday, noting that "China will take legitimate and necessary measures to safeguard its sovereignty and security interests with firm determination."

Whether the sanctions can effectively stop the US move or not, the mainland must show its determination to safeguard its own sovereignty and deter other firms and other countries from following the US in challenging China's sovereignty, they said. For the Taiwan secessionist authority, more arms sales would not bring safety, but will make it get closer to the brink of war, experts said. Zhu Fenglian, spokesperson of the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, said in a statement released on Tuesday that the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) in Taiwan wants to arm themselves to resist the reunification and realize secessionism, but will only "damage the cross-Straits peace and stability, and bring a bigger disaster to the people of Taiwan."

According to the AP, the Trump administration on Monday (US time) notified the US Congress of plans for a \$2.37 billion sale of Harpoon missile systems to Taiwan just hours after the Chinese mainland announced sanctions against US defense contractors, including Boeing, the lead

contractor on the Harpoon deal, as well as Lockheed Martin, Raytheon and other individuals and entities that are involved in arms sales to the island.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1204800.shtml>

China strongly opposes U.S. arms sales to Taiwan: defense spokesperson

China Military Online, October 28, 2020

China firmly opposes U.S. arms sales to Taiwan and has lodged solemn representations to the US side, said Senior Colonel Ren Guoqiang, spokesperson for China's Ministry of National Defense (MND). Ren made the remarks in response to press questions on the recent U.S. arms sales to Taiwan. Media reports said that the U.S. Department of State has decided to approve the sale of Harpoon missile systems and related equipment worth about 2.4 billion U.S. dollars to Taiwan. Besides, just several days ago, the U.S. Administration approved three arms sales totaling 1.8 billion U.S. dollars to the island.

The spokesperson pointed out that the U.S. government recently has approved again arms sales to Taiwan, seriously violating the one-China principle and three China-U.S. Joint Communiques, severely interfering in China's internal affairs and undermining China's sovereignty and security interests. "The move seriously damages relations between the two countries and the two militaries, as well as the peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait, China firmly opposes it and has lodged solemn representations to the U.S. side," Ren said. The Taiwan question matters for China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and is vital to China's core interests, allowing no external interference, stressed Ren. He warned that attempts made by some persons in U.S. and Taiwan to use the Taiwan question to contain China and resist reunification with force are doomed to fail.

http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2020-10/28/content_9925968.htm

China releases guidelines on national security education

China Military online, October 28, 2020

China's Ministry of Education has unveiled guidelines on national security education to foster students' awareness of safeguarding national security. The guidelines required schools and universities to launch courses teaching students about the national interests in various areas, threats to national security and ways to safeguard the national interests. In the guidelines, the ministry highlighted lectures and experiential learning in national security education as supplements to in-class study. It also encouraged the use of social resources including educational venues, professional institutions and businesses in sectors related to national security. The move aims to encourage students to become more engaged with national security matters, according to the guidelines.

http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2020-10/28/content_9926384.htm

Research and development process of new frontline patrol outfits explained

Wang Shuangzhi, Zhang Hua and Sun Xingwei

China Military Online, October 28, 2020

The PLA's frontline troops have been equipped with a number of new-type border patrol outfits recently. The upgrading of outfits reflects the improvement of the PLA's comprehensive and precise logistics support capabilities. Recently, a chief of the Military Energy Bureau under the CMC Logistic Support Department systematically introduced the research and development ideas of the new outfits, its development process, and the technological innovations in various designs.

http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2020-10/28/content_9926557.htm

China ramps up pilot training to boost drone operator ranks as unmanned vehicles rise in military importance

Liu Zhen

South China Morning Post, October 28, 2020

The Chinese army has launched professional drone operator courses at its academies as the importance of unmanned equipment increases and more skilled personnel are needed.

The first batch of professional drone operators recently sat their certificate exam at the Army Engineering University of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), PLA Daily reported on Tuesday. "In recent years, the army has looked into reform and transformation, set the focus on the new combat posts of drone operators and sped up nurturing new types of military talents," the report said.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3107474/china-ramps-pilot-training-boost-drone-operator-ranks-unmanned>

No "October Surprise" and urge US to stop provocations: defense spokesman

China Military Online, October 28, 2020

The US should walk with China toward the same goal instead of continuing provocations in sea and air spaces around China, said Senior Colonel Wu Qian, a spokesperson for the Ministry of National Defense (MND) of China, at a regular MND press conference in Beijing on October 29, 2020. He was asked to comment on the so-called "October Surprise" reported by the media that the US is considering using MQ-9 Reaper drones to attack relevant islands in the South China Sea in case of unfavorable situation for Trump's election campaign.

Snr. Col. Wu first refuted those media reports, saying that the US Defense Secretary Mark Esper has already made clarification through military and diplomatic channels that the relevant reports are not consistent with facts, and the US side has no intention of creating a military crisis against China. Wu asked the US side to act properly in its remarks. “Maintaining communication between the two militaries is very important under the current circumstances. We urge the US side to keep their words, take effective measures to stop military provocations in the sea and air spaces around China, and stop any actions that harm China’s core interests and major concerns,” said Wu.

http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2020-10/29/content_9927368.htm

China-US rivalry is main challenge to Asian giant’s development, NDRC says

Matt Ho

South China Morning Post, October 29, 2020

China’s rivalry with the United States will be the “biggest external uncertainty” that restrains its medium- and long-term development but “time is on China’s side”, the country’s top economic planning agency said in its assessment ahead of this week’s key meeting in Beijing to chart the future course of the world’s second-largest economy. “China will have to seek development in an ever more unstable and uncertain world,” it said. The assessment, completed in August and written by department chiefs and research heads, is part of the National Development and Reform Commission’s (NDRC) official planning compendium released late last month.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3107470/china-us-rivalry-main-challenge-asian-giants-development-ndrc>

China-US military exchange activities continue: Defense Spokesperson

China Military Online, October 29, 2020

The China-US military relationship plays an important role in the bilateral relations. It is in both sides' interests to maintain the stability of the China-US military relationship, which requires joint efforts, said Senior Colonel Wu Qian, a spokesperson for the Chinese Ministry of National Defense (MND), at the regular press conference in Beijing. It is reported recently that current China-US relations are facing multiple challenges. Coupled with the severe COVID-19 pandemic, whether the China-US military exchanges could proceed as normal has received widespread attention.

In response, Senior Colonel Wu briefed that senior officials from both militaries have had a telephone conversation last week and agreed to strengthen communication, properly manage differences and disagreements, and expand cooperation in fields of common interests. Besides, working groups from two militaries have conducted video conferences on crisis communication

in the past two days. And the two sides have also planned to conduct seminars on military humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) and consultations on maritime security issues by way of video conferences respectively in the coming mid-November and December.

http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2020-10/29/content_9927375.htm

China's J-20 stealth fighter shown in training dogfight on state television

Liu Zhen

South China Morning Post, October 29, 2020

China's air force has stepped up combat training exercises involving its J-20 stealth fighters, according to state media, as tensions in the region continue to mount. Footage from a drill aired on official broadcaster CCTV recently showed two of the warplanes firing dozens of decoy flares, which are typically used during dogfights. The flares burn at high temperatures and are used to counter heat-seeking missiles fired by the adversary that target aircraft engines.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3107674/chinas-j-20-stealth-fighter-shown-training-dogfights-state>

High-tech serves to improve border troops' training and living conditions: Defense Spokesperson

China Military Online, October 29, 2020

Senior Colonel Wu Qian, a spokesperson for China's Ministry of National Defense (MND), introduced more details on the improvement of border defense troops' training and living conditions on plateau by the high-tech applications at the regular press conference in Beijing on October 29. In terms of accommodation, a new dismountable self-energized insulated cabin is equipped, which can be built by service members themselves and is self-sufficient in energy. Wu said that in areas where the outdoor temperature is -40°C with an elevation of above 5,000m, the indoor temperature can be kept at higher than 15°C . Moreover, the newly-developed outfits, such as the new individual sleeping bags, down training coats and cold-proof boots, are characterized by cold prevention and heat retention, portability and higher comfortableness, which have been specifically designed for alpine cold areas.

Wu added that the new thermal insulation devices for food storage are also equipped and new-type outdoor instant foods for alpine cold areas are under trial. The outdoor instant food can effectively get self-heat at an elevation of 3000m and a temperature above -30°C . In addition, a batch of new-type insulated vegetable cellars with moisture-proof, anti-freeze, and fresh-keeping functions have been built and put into use. The UAVs are also used to deliver fresh fruits and vegetables to duty posts to overcome the inconvenience in materials replenishment.

http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2020-10/29/content_9927406.htm

China promotes knowledge to guard national security against foreign infiltration and espionage

Liu Caiyu

Global Times, October 31, 2020

Villages, urban communities, schools and government departments in China recently set off a craze for learning how to guard against the infiltration and influence of foreign anti-China forces as Monday marks the sixth anniversary of the implementation of China's counter-espionage law. Cities such as Fuzhou in South China's Fujian Province, Luoyang in Central China's Henan Province, Nantong in East China's Jiangsu Province and Zhangjiajie in Central China's Hunan Province have ramped up efforts on mobilizing local residents and students to learn the law.

With 20 big display boards containing comics and words portraying what counter-espionage is and classic cases related to spies on campus, the Siyuan middle school in Qiongzong, South China's Hainan Province, tries to explain China's counter-espionage law to students in a plain and understandable way. Some cities have also hung banners, set up exhibition boards, and distributed brochures to publicize knowledge about national security and anti- espionage. People are also encouraged to report suspected foreign infiltration, espionage and anti-national security activities through the reporting platform and phone number 12339. Those activities will help to create an atmosphere in China in which "every Chinese citizen shoulder responsibility in fighting against foreign infiltration and spies," analysts said.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1205236.shtml>

US and China push to modernise and expand weapons in race for naval dominance in the Pacific

Kristin Huang

South China Morning Post, November 1, 2020

The race between China and the United States to develop a more capable navy is expected to further intensify, with Washington planning to equip its destroyers with hypersonic missiles, outpacing China's supersonic anti-ship missiles, analysts said. The move to install the highly advanced weapons came after US Secretary of Defence Mark Esper said in early October that the US Navy would need more than 500 ships in its fleet to ensure maritime superiority over China in coming decades. According to military news website Defense News, which quoted US President Donald Trump's national security adviser Robert O'Brien, the US will equip its attack submarines

and its destroyers with hypersonic missiles in a bid to stave off the mounting threat posed by China in the Pacific.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3107805/us-and-china-push-modernise-and-expand-weapons-race-naval>