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Focus: Nuclear, Space, Missiles and other Security Issues

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China to launch core module of space station in first half of 2021

China Military Online, January 5, 2021

China plans to launch the core module of its manned space station in the first half of 2021, a senior official said. The core module will be sent by a Long March-5B Y2 rocket from the Wenchang Spacecraft Launch Site in Hainan Province, said Zhou Jianping, chief designer of China's manned space program, at a handover ceremony for the return capsule of the Shenzhou-10 manned spacecraft in Shaoshan, central China's Hunan Province.

"Subsequent space missions include the launches of Tianzhou-2 cargo craft and Shenzhou-12 manned craft after the core module is sent into orbit," Zhou said. Tests on the core module have been completed, and astronaut training is underway. The astronauts will carry out a number of extravehicular activities. China is scheduled to complete the construction of the space station around 2022. The construction project will be implemented in two phases. Six flight missions, including the launch of the core module, have been scheduled in the phase of key technology validation.

http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2021-01/05/content_9963050.htm

China speeds up building aircraft carriers but will PLA sailors be trained for hi-tech ships in time?

Minnie Chan

South China Morning Post, January 5, 2021

A Chinese shipbuilder has stepped up construction of two new-generation aircraft carriers, while the People's Liberation Army is accelerating its training programme to meet the needs of the hi-tech warships when they launch. Two independent military sources told the South China Morning Post that the keel laying would start early this year for its fourth aircraft carrier. Work on its sister ship, the Type 002, has already started, and both ships will be equipped with the most advanced electromagnetic catapult launchers.

Construction work on the fourth giant ship had been postponed because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the associated economic slowdown and some technical problems, the sources said.

"The navy bought and prepared all the special steel for the fourth ship last year, with work on some vessel components being started," said one of the sources, who requested anonymity.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3116402/china-speeds-building-aircraft-carriers-will-pla-sailors-be>

China opposes adverse provisions in US defense act: Defense Spokesperson

China Military Online, January 5, 2021

China firmly opposes adverse provisions against China in the US National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 and lodges solemn representations to the United States, Senior Colonel Ren Guoqiang, spokesperson for China's Ministry of National Defense (MND), said in a statement released on Monday. Ren made the remarks when asked to comment on the newly passed Act and another Consolidated Appropriations Act recently signed by US President Trump.

According to media reports, the US Congress last Friday passed the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021, which includes several China-related provisions proposing the adoption of whole-government strategy to impose costs on China and establishing "Pacific Deterrence Initiative" to counter the development of Chinese military. The Act continues the super power's meddling in China's internal affairs by supporting selling arms to Taiwan and interference in issues concerning Hong Kong and Xinjiang. In addition, US president Trump also signed the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, which supports normalization of arms sales to Taiwan and the island's entry into international organizations.

The spokesperson summarized the two Acts as "stick to the Cold War mentality, hype the so-called 'China military threat' and the China-US strategic competition, and violate norms of international relations". The two Acts are a gross interference in China's internal affairs as well as a major breach of the one-China principle and the three China-U.S. joint communiques, said Ren, adding that such Acts also severely damage the development of China-US relations and mil-to-mil relations and harms China's sovereignty, security and development interests. "China is strongly opposed to such Acts and lodges solemn representations to the United States." The spokesperson stated that China is always committed to peaceful development, upholds a vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, and firmly pursues the national defense policy that is defensive in nature and the military strategy of active defense. China is the builder of world peace, contributor to global development, and the maintainer of international order, said Ren.

http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2021-01/05/content_9962792.htm

PLA Navy develops new submarine escape immersion equipment

China Military Online, January 4, 2021

The new individual Submarine Escape Immersion Equipment (SEIE) has completed the combat performance test in the waters of a sea area of the East China Sea recently, indicating that the PLA Navy submariners' self-rescue and escape capabilities have reached the advanced international level. This new outfit is developed by the Special Medical Center of the PLA Naval Medical University. It comprises four components, including a fast floating escape suit, hood inflation system, escape suit detection device, and hood inflation detection device. Owing to the lightweight,

wear-resistant, waterproof, and anti-aging new materials, and the design of the inner thermal liner and the individual life raft, the new SEIE is more convenient to use and provides better protection for the submariner on keeping warm and reaching for surface rescue.

Fast ascent and escape is a development direction widely recognized by the world for self-rescue and escape of submariners. The new SEIE takes into account two submarine escape modes, including rapid ascent escape and depressurized escape , which can be applied in various types of submarines of the PLA Navy. In the event of a submarine emergency, with the support of the one-person escape cabin onboard, the new SEIE allows survivors to quickly ascend and escape at depths down to 200 meters . It can also achieve a depressurized escape at depths down to 120 meters in combination with the existing depressurized escape breathing device.

http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2021-01/04/content_9962642.htm

By air and sea: China's two-pronged strategy to grind Japan down over disputed islands

Kristin Huang

South China Morning Post, January 2, 2021

The idea is to wear down Japanese resistance over time – and so far it seems to be having an effect. In the last few years, China has been ramping up its civilian and military presence in the airspace and waters around a rocky, uninhabited group of islands in the East China Sea.

The islands, called the Senkakus in Japan and the Diaoyus in China, are under Japanese administration but claimed by both countries. As part of its strategy, China has sent military planes on hundreds of sorties in the area, forcing the Japan Self-Defence Forces to scramble its fighter jets from dawn till dusk. Observers say the tactic is draining Japanese personnel and equipment but also comes at a big risk for China.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3116179/air-and-sea-chinas-two-pronged-strategy-grind-japan-down-over>

China blasts Nato with British aircraft carrier 'heading to South China Sea'

Catherine Wong

South China Morning Post, January 1, 2021

China said it would take necessary measures to safeguard its sovereignty as it warned against the British navy dispatching warships to the disputed South China Sea.

The remarks were made in response to expectations that Britain's newest aircraft carrier, HMS Queen Elizabeth, will be deployed to the Pacific region, including the contentious sea, for its first operational mission. "The Chinese side believes that the South China Sea should not become a sea of great power rivalry dominated by weapons and warships," defence ministry spokesman Tan

Kefei said when asked about Britain's plans during a monthly press conference in Beijing on Thursday.

Former British defence minister Gavin Williamson had said in February 2019 that HMS Queen Elizabeth's first operational mission would include the South China Sea, "making a global Great Britain a reality". Washington's hardened position on Beijing's claims in South China Sea heightens US-China tensions. The aircraft carrier and its strike group are also expected to join forces with the American military and the Japanese Self-Defence Forces near Japan's Ryukyu Islands "as soon as early next year", according to Kyodo News.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3116146/china-blasts-nato-british-aircraft-carrier-heading-south-china>

Why did the PLA land its massive Y-20 warplane on Fiery Cross Reef?

Kristin Huang

South China Morning Post, January 1, 2021

China flew its biggest warplane, the Y-20 transporter, to Fiery Cross Reef in the disputed South China Sea on December 25, satellite images show. The huge aircraft was seen on the airstrip on the militarised reef in the Spratly Islands but was not observed loading or unloading cargo.

The images were posted on LinkedIn by Ken Joyce, director of product management at Maxar Technologies, an American space technology company.

"Y-20 transport observed at Fiery Cross Reef. Detected by DeepCore AI/ML," he said. A Chinese military source confirmed the operation and said the Y-20 was deployed to test its capabilities. "It's the first time China has deployed the Y-20 to the Spratlys," the person said, without disclosing any further details.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3116028/south-china-sea-why-did-pla-land-its-massive-y-20-warplane>

China's defense ministry urges US to put its hammer down and promote world peace

China Military Online, December 31, 2020

"Its intention is nothing more than to create an excuse for the US to seek absolute military superiority. China is firmly opposed to this", said Senior Colonel Tan Kefei, a spokesperson for China's Ministry of National Defense (MND), when commenting on the US newly released maritime strategy and its accusations on China at a regular press conference on December 31. A new maritime strategy Advantage at Sea: Prevailing with Integrated All-Domain Naval Power was jointly released on Dec. 17 by the US Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard, in which the US

accused China of strengthening military strength in space and cyberspace, threatening world peace and prosperity.

In response, Snr. Col. Tan remarked that to a man with a hammer, everything looks like a nail. Some people in the US still hold the outdated Cold War mentality and the narrow-minded zero-sum game, hypothesize other countries as threats, frequently incite disputes and conflicts, and undermine the international system and order. He stressed China adheres to the path of peaceful development, unswervingly pursues the defensive national defense policy, and resolutely safeguards national sovereignty, dignity and core interests. With regard to the China-US military relationship this year, the spokesperson said the relationship has experienced some twists and turns disturbed by the negative words and deeds of the US, but both sides maintained strategic communication and risk control, and the relationship between the two militaries is generally stable.

http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2020-12/31/content_9961282.htm

China plans intensive round of military drills in end-of-year catch-up

Kristin Huang

South China Morning Post, December 29, 2020

Three 10-day military exercises will be held simultaneously off the southern Chinese coast from Tuesday, according to notices posted by China's maritime safety administrations.

According to three separate notices released on Tuesday night, access to the waters surrounding Hainan – China's southernmost province – in the South China Sea will be restricted during the military training. The exercises have been planned for more than a month and will be a major year-end drill to catch up with all the training and tests delayed by the coronavirus pandemic, a People's Liberation Army (PLA) insider told the South China Morning Post.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3115719/china-plans-intensive-round-military-drills-end-year-catch>

Intelligentized Warfare Symposium held in Beijing

China Military Online, December 28, 2020

The second Intelligentized Warfare Symposium was recently held at the National Defense University (NDU) of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) in Beijing, and more than 80 military representatives attended the event. This symposium, sponsored by the National Security College of the NDU, aims to discuss the impact and challenges brought by military applications of AI on global strategic stability and military security and to explore ways to accelerate their development.

In the symposium, the participants conducted in-depth discussions and exchanges on such topics as "military applications of AI in major countries", "development trend of intelligentized approach in the military", and "integrated development of mechanized, informationized and intelligentized approaches".

http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2020-12/28/content_9959511.htm

China, Russia hold 2nd joint aerial strategic patrol in Asia-Pacific

China Military Online, December 23, 2020

The air forces of China and Russia have held their 2nd joint aerial strategic patrol in the Asia-Pacific region on December 22, according to an announcement jointly released on Tuesday night by the Ministry of National Defense of the People's Republic of China and the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation. The announcement said that China sent four H-6K bombers to form a joint formation with two Tu-95 bombers from the Russian side to conduct the joint patrol in relevant airspace over the Sea of Japan and the East China Sea. During the flight, the aircraft of the two air forces strictly observed the relevant provisions of international law and did not enter the airspace of other countries.

The announcement also stated that the China-Russia joint aerial strategic patrol aims to further develop the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination in the new era, and enhance the level of the two militaries' strategic coordination and joint operational capability to jointly safeguard global strategic stability. The patrol is part of annual military cooperation plan between China and Russia and does not target any third party.

http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2020-12/23/content_9957168.htm

China-Russia bomber patrol a day after US sanctions upsets Seoul, Tokyo

Rachel Zhang

South China Morning Post, December 23, 2020

Japan scrambles fighter jets as six warplanes fly over islands controlled by South Korea but which it also claims. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi tells his Russian counterpart the two neighbours must 'maintain stable relations in a chaotic world' as Washington hits both countries with new sanctions. Chinese and Russian bombers took part in a joint patrol over the western Pacific on Tuesday, a day after the two countries were hit with fresh sanctions from the United States, but sparking concern in South Korea and Japan. The four Chinese H-6Ks and two Russian Tu-95s flew together over the Sea of Japan – also known as the East Sea – and the East China Sea in an exercise that was part of an annual programme of military cooperation, China's defence ministry

said. On Monday, the US announced new curbs on Chinese and Russian companies – many of them in the aviation sector – buying American technology.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3115122/china-russia-bomber-patrol-day-after-us-sanctions-upsets-seoul>

China launches new Long March-8 rocket in step towards reusable space vehicles

Kristin Huang

South China Morning Post, December 23, 2020

The rocket carries five satellites into space on its maiden flight after launch from Hainan. Future variant of the rocket will be reusable, enabling cheaper, more frequent launches as China seeks to grow its share of the space launch market. China launched its latest rocket from its southern island of Hainan on Tuesday, as it progresses towards its target of developing reusable launch vehicles. The Long March-8 rocket's maiden flight, carrying five satellites into space, came five days after the return of the Chang'e 5 mission from the moon. A future variant of the new rocket, the Long March-8R, will be reusable, putting it on a par with the Falcon series made by American aerospace company SpaceX.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/science/article/3114956/china-launches-new-long-march-8-rocket-step-towards-reusable>

China aims for commercial race with at least 20 Long March-8 rocket launches a year

Kristin Huang

South China Morning Post, December 23, 2020

Programme's commander-in-chief says he is confident goal to launch rockets simply, quickly and often is achievable. Reduced costs and future reusability aimed at making Chinese launches economical service for governments and companies. China will streamline assembly of its Long March-8 rocket and aim to make more than 20 launches a year, according to the programme's chief officer.

Commander-in-chief Xiao Yun said on an official government WeChat account that China's goal was to launch rockets as simply and quickly as possible. His remarks were published on Tuesday, hours after the new rocket's maiden launch from the southern island of Hainan.

The short preparation time, high launch frequency and planned future reusability would help reduce costs and create a competitive commercial launching service.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3115067/china-aims-commercial-race-least-20-long-march-8-rocket>

