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SYLLOGE ON CHINA

Focus: Nuclear, Space, Missiles and other Security Issues

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Chinese researchers spy blind spots in US hypersonic ‘tracking layer’ ambitions

Stephen Chen

South China Morning Post, August 10, 2021

Team at a PLA-affiliated institute says the new American system would be an upgrade but the network would need to be on a bigger scale. Constellation would also need support from traditional satellites to see targets directly below it, they say. A global early warning system being built in the US to track hypersonic weapons will be an improvement on its existing system but have to overcome several big challenges to be effective, according to a study by Chinese military scientists. Two defence contractors, SpaceX and L3 Harris, won a bid in October to build the “tracking layer” system for the US Space Force. If everything goes to plan, eight satellites designed to keep tabs on hypersonic missiles will be sent to near-Earth orbit of about 1,000km (620 miles) by early 2023.

https://www.scmp.com/news/china/science/article/3144425/chinese-researchers-spy-blind-spots-us-hypersonic-tracking-layer?module=perpetual_scroll&pgtype=article&campaign=3144425

New equipment account for 81.6% in Zapad/Interaction-2021: Chinese commander

China Military Online, August 10, 2021

On August 9, the China-Russia joint exercise Zapad/Interaction-2021 officially kicked off. In the next few days, the Chinese and Russian participating troops would conduct mixed grouping, joint planning and implementation of joint field training against the background of jointly safeguarding regional security and stability. Lieutenant General Liu Xiaowu, deputy commander of the PLA Western Theater Command and commanding officer of the Chinese participating troops, introduced the highlights of the exercise in detail in an interview.

http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2021-08/10/content_10073968.htm

China-Russia military exercise starts first-phase drill

Xinhuanet, August 10, 2021

The first-phase drill of the ZAPAD/INTERACTION-2021, a joint military exercise between China and Russia, began in northwest China. The two-day drill is designed to guide military command organs from both sides to optimize their command activities, which are related to intelligence, decision-making, planning, and control and assessment. For the first time, a sub-command for Russian officers has been established within the joint command, and a command information system specially designed for the two militaries has been applied.

The joint exercise kicked off on Monday at a combined-arms tactical training base of the People's Liberation Army in northwest China's Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, and is set to continue until Aug. 13. It aims to deepen the joint anti-terrorism operations between the two militaries and demonstrate the firm determination and strength of the two countries to

jointly safeguard international and regional security and stability.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2021-08/10/c_1310119733.htm

Media report claiming UK carrier group spots PLA submarines ‘not credible’

Guo Yuandan and Liu Xuanzun

Global Times, August 09, 2021

A report by a UK media organization recently claimed a UK aircraft carrier strike group that sailed in the South China Sea in late July spotted Chinese nuclear-powered submarines that shadowed it during its voyage, but Chinese military experts said on Monday that the report is not credible, and is aimed at showing off the group's presence and boasting of its anti-submarine capability.

The report, published by the Daily Express on Monday, did not give a source for the information. It claimed that two Type 093 nuclear-powered attack submarines of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy were located by anti-submarine sonar operators aboard the HMS Kent and HMS Richmond frigates, which served as escorts for the HMS Queen Elizabeth aircraft carrier in the carrier group, as the group left the South China Sea and moved into the Pacific Ocean. It further claimed that a UK Astute class submarine identified a third Type 093 submarine as it patrolled ahead of the carrier group. The reason why the UK operators could identify the type of submarine is that the sounds generated by propellers are unique to every submarine, the Daily Express said.

“This shows that our anti-submarine capabilities, which declined significantly during Iraq and Afghanistan, are back up to speed and doing what they're supposed to be doing. It's good news,” the report quoted UK former rear admiral Chris Parry as saying. However, several Chinese military experts reached by the Global Times on Monday questioned the authenticity of the report, as they believed that by publishing such a report, the UK is showing off its presence.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202108/1230982.shtml>

China's aircraft carrier pilots upskill for demanding night missions

Amber Wang

South China Morning Post, August 09, 2021

A group of instructors qualify to train other personnel for the difficult task of landing and taking off in the dark from the carrier's deck. The skills are essential to modern warfare, analysts say. China's naval air force is expanding its night combat strength with a new group of fighter pilots qualifying as instructors for night-time take-offs and landings on the country's aircraft carriers.

According to PLA Daily, several pilots from the People's Liberation Army Naval Aviation University gained the certification after performing the manoeuvres in J-15 fighter jets on the carrier Liaoning in high winds on the Bohai Sea. State broadcaster CCTV quoted Wang

Yong, a university instructor who took part in the certification exam, as saying the risks of landing at night on the vessel were many times greater than that of landing during the day.

https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3144398/chinas-aircraft-carrier-pilots-upskill-demanding-night-missions?module=perpetual_scroll&pgtype=article&campaign=3144398

PLA intensifies helicopter firing drill in plateau area

China Military Online, August 09, 2021

Recently, an army aviation brigade assigned to the PLA Xinjiang Military Command organized a high-intensity live-fire drill with a large fleet of Z-10 helicopters and multiple types of ammunition in a complex plateau area at an elevation of 5300 meters.

http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2021-08/09/content_10073284.htm

New submarine hints at China's search for stealth ahead of potential Taiwan war: analysts

Minnie Chan

South China Morning Post, August 08, 2021

China's move to create quieter submarines by reconfiguring its Type 039A diesel-powered submarines would aid the Chinese navy in a possible war for Taiwan reunification and territory conflicts in the East and South China seas, according to military analysts. The PLA Navy now owns one more advanced new variant of the Type 039A submarine featuring an unusual sail, which appears to increase its agility and stealth, according to a recent collaborative study by Eric Genevelle, a French submarine encyclopaedia author, and Richard W. Stirn, a former sonar technician submariner working for the United States Navy.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3144238/new-submarine-hints-chinas-search-stealth-ahead-potential>

China needs to increase nuclear capacity to maintain minimum deterrence against rising US coercion

Hu Xijin

Global Times, August 07, 2021

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken expressed his "deep concern" about the "rapid growth" of China's nuclear arsenal with Southeast Asian foreign ministers. He accused Beijing of "sharply deviating from its decades-old nuclear strategy based on minimum deterrence." This is the US' official response from the highest level after various US think tanks over the past few months have claimed that China is building a great number of "new missile silos" in Yumen of Northwest China's Gansu Province and in the Hami region in Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.

Chinese officials have not directly responded to these allegations made by US think tanks. They have neither confirmed nor denied them. It is important to note that China has never abandoned its minimum deterrence nuclear strategy. However, due to the comprehensive strategic threat that the US keeps posing to China, the nuclear capabilities Beijing needs to achieve "minimum deterrence" are now different from the past. As the potential risk stemming from US nuclear coercion against China is clearly increasing, China needs to have sufficient nuclear forces to contain such a risk. Even many ordinary Chinese people feel the urgency of strengthening China's nuclear deterrent is common sense. We don't know if those structures shown in the satellite photos in Yumen and Hami are silos or the foundations of wind power plants as some scholars have speculated. But if it does turn out that they really are silos, Chinese public opinion will definitely support the construction of them unconditionally.

Washington is in no moral position to accuse China of this. China has only a fraction of the number of nuclear warheads that the US has. China is also the only nuclear power that has pledged not to be the first to use nuclear weapons. The US has never indicated that it would consider making the same commitment. There is no information from Beijing on whether it is strengthening its nuclear buildup in the face of a realistic threat from Washington. But even if we were doing that, it would have nothing to do with Southeast Asian countries, or even with Japan and Australia, because China's nuclear policy also includes another firm commitment of not using or threatening to use nuclear weapons against any non-nuclear-weapon state.

Once China substantially strengthens its nuclear forces, its only purpose will be to deter the US. Since there is already no mutual trust between China and the US, Chinese society is fully convinced that the US' ultimate strategic goal is to bring China down. While not giving up on maintaining peace between the two countries, we must be prepared for the possibility that a war could eventually occur in the Taiwan Straits or the South China Sea. One of China's major strategic missions today is to make the most complete layout for that day. China is already capable of destroying various US conventional military forces that enter China's coastal waters in wartime and striking US military bases in the Asia-Pacific region that support US intervention. Even though the US' naval and air forces are powerful, it has become increasingly difficult for them to gain an advantage in China's coastal waters. China is gradually achieving dominance in conventional warfare in the Taiwan Straits and the South China Sea.

Our next step is to ensure that the US does not dare to impose a nuclear deterrent on China if it loses its conventional military intervention capability. Our nuclear forces must become so powerful that the elites in Washington will tremble in fear at the mere thought of imposing a nuclear deterrent on China. China's DF-41 Intercontinental Ballistic Missile, and sea- and air-based nuclear forces have greatly increased the country's ability to survive and created a credible Chinese nuclear retaliation capability. As US policy toward China over the past few years has demonstrated a certain derangement, we need to not only increase our second-strike capability, but also make Washington keep in mind all the time that we can retaliate. This is to ensure that whenever the US has the extreme impulse to suppress China, it will immediately remember not to take things to the level of a military showdown between the two countries, and thus, calmness and balance will be maintained.

Southeast Asian countries, including US allies, should avoid being misled by the US. They need to believe that once China strengthens its nuclear forces, it is solely to maintain peace and suppress the US' warmongering ideas. In other words, the stronger China's nuclear forces are, the more it is guaranteed that the US will not do something silly. This is the ultimate advice to the US in a way that it can best understand so that it will not provoke wars in the Taiwan Straits and the South China Sea.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202108/1230817.shtml>

South China Sea: are carrier-killer missiles being primed for PLA tests?

Teddy Ng

South China Morning Post, August 06, 2021

China has sealed off part of the South China Sea for a military drill on a scale that analysts say could involve tests of carrier-killer ballistic missiles. The drill is expected to take place between Friday and Tuesday, and comes as the US and its allies also hold exercises in the region.

In a notice on Wednesday, the China Maritime Safety Administration said general maritime traffic was banned from waters southeast of Hainan Island to those around the disputed Paracel Islands in the South China Sea during the five-day period.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3144111/south-china-sea-are-carrier-killer-missiles-being-primed-pla>

PLA holds large drills amid military threats

Liu Xuanzun

Global Times, August 05, 2021

A naval fleet comprised of the guided-missile destroyers Ningbo (Hull 139) and Taiyuan (Hull 131), as well as the guided-missile frigate Nantong (Hull 601), steams in astern formation in waters of the East China Sea during a maritime training drill in late January, 2021. Photo:China Military Online. A naval fleet comprised of the guided-missile destroyers Ningbo (Hull 139) and Taiyuan (Hull 131), as well as the guided-missile frigate Nantong (Hull 601), steams in astern formation in waters of the East China Sea during a maritime training drill in late January, 2021. Photo:China Military Online

At a time when the US is holding large-scale military exercises targeting China, and several countries including the UK, Germany and India plan to send or have already sent warships to the South China Sea, China announced it will hold a military exercise from Friday to Tuesday in the South China Sea, setting up a vast navigation restriction zone some observers said resembles a drill conducted last year in which the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) reportedly conducted live-fire "aircraft carrier killer" anti-ship ballistic missiles

exercises. While details on the upcoming drill remain speculative, it will serve as a response to the recent provocations, demonstrating that China has "hunting rifles ready against the wolves" that hunger for China's core interests, experts said.

China will hold a military training in the South China Sea from Friday to Tuesday, and other vessels are prohibited from entering the navigation restriction zone, read a notice released by the Maritime Safety Administration. The coordinates provided in the notice show that the exclusion zone stretches from waters off the southeast of Hainan Island to a majority of waters around the Xisha Islands, meaning that the exercise area is larger than even the Hainan Island, the National Defense Newspaper reported. The notice did not give more details on the exercise, but a Taipei-based news agency reported that the PLA launched anti-ship ballistic missiles in the South China Sea in a similar exercise last year.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202108/1230715.shtml>

Rocket engine prototype gives super boost to China's space ambitions

Liu Zhen

South China Morning Post, August 05, 2021

China's space programme has moved a step closer to crewed lunar and interplanetary missions with the completion of a prototype super heavy-lift rocket engine, according to state media.

The 220-tonne engine is intended to power the next generation Long March 9 (CZ-9) carrier rocket, expected to enter service before 2030. The CZ-9 will be a three-stage rocket with boosters, with the new engine forming its core and second stage, according to China Space News. "It is one of the most important symbols of a nation becoming a space power," the report said.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/science/article/3143935/rocket-engine-prototype-gives-super-boost-chinas-space-ambitions>

China's new off-road assault vehicles go into mass production

Amber Wang

South China Morning Post, August 04, 2021

China's latest off-road assault vehicles are rolling off the mass production line and will become part of the military's joint combat system, according to state media. Footage aired on state broadcaster CCTV last week showed the third-generation Dongfeng Mengshi vehicles being produced in a factory, along with hundreds of them parked and ready for delivery to the People's Liberation Army. Zhou Chenming, a military analyst based in Beijing, said the vehicle had gone into mass production and was expected to be widely used by the PLA.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3143815/chinas-new-road-assault->

[vehicles-go-mass-production](#)

PLA Army brigade braces for tank biathlon of IAG 2021

China Military Online, August 08, 2021

Soldiers from a brigade under the PLA 75th Group Army are making final-stage preparations for the Tank Biathlon event of International Army Games (IAG) 2021, which will take place at the Alabino training ground in Russia soon. The Tank Biathlon event consists of the individual race and rally race. The training camp, fully taking into account such uncertainties as wind, dust and water mist at the competition site, has conducted targeted training and enhanced precision operation. After more than four months' training, four tank crews have been selected from the training camp, based on the members' performance, psychological quality, responsiveness and other indicators, to compete in Russia.

According to Tang Xiaoming, deputy commander of the brigade under the PLA 75th Group Army, as the event draws near, the training camp will lay equal stress on adjusting the contestants' mentality and strengthening last-minute training, in a bid to adapt them to all sorts of conditions and enable them to perform their best on site. "We will do our best to be fully prepared and strive for satisfactory results in the arena".

http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2021-08/04/content_10070982.htm

Chinese, Turkish presidents exchange congratulations on 50th anniversary of diplomatic ties

China Military Online, August 04, 2021

Chinese President Xi Jinping and his Turkish counterpart, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, on Wednesday exchanged messages of congratulations on the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between their countries. Over the past 50 years, bilateral relations have been developing steadily, Xi said in his message, adding that since the establishment of the China-Turkey strategic cooperative relationship in 2010, exchanges and cooperation in various fields have been moving forward in an orderly manner.

Since last year, Xi said, the two sides have been supporting each other in the fight against the COVID-19 outbreak, and carried out fruitful cooperation on vaccines, which has deepened the friendship between the people of the two countries. He said he attaches great importance to the development of China-Turkey relations, and stands ready to work with Erdogan to take the 50th anniversary as an opportunity to further advance bilateral ties.

http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2021-08/04/content_10070964.htm

German warship heads for South China Sea as it deploys on six-month Indo-Pacific mission

South China Morning Post, August 03, 2021

The Bayern will sail to Singapore, South Korea and Australia during the mission to strengthen Germany's presence in the region. Crucially, the frigate will pass through the contested South China Sea in December, but is expected to stick to common trade routes. Germany dispatched a frigate to the Indo-Pacific region on Monday for the first time in almost 20 years, in a move that could put strain on Berlin's delicate relationship with Beijing.

The "Bayern" sailed from Wilhelmshaven harbour with more than 200 soldiers on board for a six-month mission to strengthen Germany's presence in the region that will take it to Singapore, South Korea and Australia. Crucially, in December it will also pass through the South China Sea, a flashpoint of tensions between China, its neighbours in the region and their Western allies such as the United States.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/asia/southeast-asia/article/3143567/german-warship-heads-south-china-sea-it-deploys-six-month>

Joint Press Release of the 12th Round of China-India Corps Commander Level Meeting

Ministry of National Defense, August 08, 2021

The 12th round of India-China Corps Commander Level Meeting was held at the Chushul-Moldo border meeting point on the Indian side. This round of meeting was held following the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of India and People's Republic of China on 14th July in Dushanbe and the 22nd meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC) held on 25th June.

The two sides had a candid and in-depth exchange of views on resolution of remaining areas related to disengagement along the Line of Actual Control in the Western Sector of India-China border areas. The two sides noted that this round of meeting was constructive, which further enhanced mutual understanding. They agreed to resolve these remaining issues in an expeditious manner in accordance with the existing agreements and protocols and maintain the momentum of dialogue and negotiations. The two sides also agreed that in the interim they will continue their effective efforts in ensuring stability along the LAC in the Western Sector and jointly maintain peace and tranquility.

http://eng.mod.gov.cn/news/2021-08/02/content_4890979.htm

China's space-tracking ship Yuanwang-3 completes new monitoring missions

Xinhua, August 01, 2021

China's space-tracking ship Yuanwang-3 returned to its homeport in east China's Jiangsu Province Sunday after completing a new round of maritime monitoring missions. During the missions, Yuanwang-3 ensured Fengyun-3E meteorological satellite's entry into planned orbit. Commissioned on May 18, 1995, Yuanwang-3 is a second-generation Chinese space-tracking ship. It has undertaken more than 90 maritime tracking and monitoring tasks for

spacecraft, including the Shenzhou spaceships, Chang'e lunar probes and BeiDou satellites.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2021-08/01/c_1310100970.htm

Chinese President Xi Jinping calls for greater focus on military development

Eduardo Baptista

South China Morning Post, July 31, 2021

Chinese President Xi Jinping has called for a greater focus on national defence and the military in a speech given on the eve of an important military anniversary and as the nation faces a growing range of security risks. After giving a spirited speech on the achievements of China's Communist Party during its centennial celebrations earlier this month, Xi said on Friday: "On the path of completely building a modern socialist country and realising the second centennial goal, national defence and the military must be placed in a more important position, and the consolidation of national defence and a strong military must be accelerated. "We must persist in strengthening the overall planning of war and make preparations for military struggle."

https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3143321/chinese-president-xi-jinping-calls-greater-focus-military?module=perpetual_scroll&pgtype=article&campaign=3143321