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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

Taiwan counts on military conscription reform to deter China invasion

Kathrin Hille

Financial Times, January 02, 2023

A low-key US military delegation arrived in Taiwan last month to assess its army, navy and air force and explore what the country's armed services could gain from closer co-operation with Washington. The visit's aims were the same as Taipei's high-profile announcement last week that it was lengthening conscription: to strengthen Taiwan's defences enough to deter China from attempting an invasion. The People's Republic of China, which claims Taiwan as part of its territory, has threatened to use force to bring the island under its control since the ruling Chinese Communist party's Nationalist civil war adversaries fled there in 1949.

<https://www.ft.com/content/c8762364-da8f-4543-a440-1ea72ccfabbf>

Chinese military short of troops trained in hi-tech operations, PLA Daily reveals in rare show of candour

Kristin Huang

South China Morning Post, January 02, 2023

The vice-captain of a warship has yet to complete a key training test, China's military has revealed, in an indirect but rare acknowledgement of its shortage of highly skilled troops. The admission, in a recent media report, highlights a core problem as China speeds up the modernisation of the People's Liberation Army – a lack of hi-tech expertise limiting state-of-the-art equipment from use to its full extent, especially in the navy. The vice-captain of the Zhangye – a Type 056 corvette – had not completed an important training assessment, military mouthpiece PLA Daily said in a report last week.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3205251/chinese-military-short-troops-trained-hi-tech-operations-pla-daily-reveals-rare-show-candour>

Blinken discussed U.S.-China relationship in call with China's Qin

Nikkei Asia, January 02, 2023

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke with incoming Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang over the phone, Blinken said on Twitter, after China last week appointed its ambassador to the United States to be its new foreign minister. Blinken said he discussed the U.S.-China relationship and maintaining open lines of communication in his phone call with Qin. China appointed Qin, its ambassador to the United States and a trusted aide of President Xi Jinping, to be its new foreign minister, as Beijing and Washington seek to stabilize rocky relations.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/US-China-tensions/Blinken-discussed-U.S.-China-relationship-in-call-with-China-s-Qin>

European politicians should be wary of Rasmussen's visit to Taiwan island and avoid becoming strategic pawns

Global Times, January 03, 2023

Grasping to a personal political fantasy, former prime minister of Denmark and ex-NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen arrived on the island of Taiwan for a three-day visit, which experts believed to be the latest attempt by a former politicians to access personal benefit by pandering to political correctness. During his scheduled stay, Rasmussen, founder of the Alliance of Democracies Foundation will meet with Taiwan regional leader Tsai Ing-wen, Lai Ching-te, Joseph Wu, lawmakers and think tank scholars. The foundation was sanctioned by the Chinese government in March, 2021. In a separate press release issued by the foundation, it said the visit was the first official visit by a former NATO secretary-general. "The visit will focus on support from the democratic world for Taiwan and closer EU-Taiwan relations," it said.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202301/1283135.shtml>

China's nukes use U.S. technology

Bill Gertz

The Washington Times, January 03, 2023

Beijing's rapid buildup of nuclear forces has been assisted by American nuclear and missile technology obtained by Chinese spies and through U.S. space and nuclear cooperation in the 1990s, according to a review of Chinese technology records and internal U.S. government documents. The Pentagon disclosed last month that China's stockpile will have at least 1,500 strategic nuclear warheads by 2035, up from 200 just a few years ago and 400 warheads today. Adm. Charles Richard, commander of U.S. nuclear forces until December 9, further sounded the alarm on the Chinese nuclear expansion last month when he formally notified Congress that the size of Chinese nuclear forces exceeded those of the United States for the first time in one of three unspecified areas: warheads, long-range missiles or launchers.

<https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2023/jan/3/chinas-nuclear-forces-built-part-us-technology/>

Japan urged to take calls from intl community seriously over its dumping of nuclear-contaminated water

Global Times, January 04, 2023

The dumping of nuclear-contaminated water is not Japan's own business, and China is urging Japan to take seriously the just calls from the international community, consult on related issues with stakeholders including its neighbors and Pacific Island countries, deal with the contaminated water in a transparent,

scientific and safe way, and accept supervision from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Mao Ning, a spokesperson from China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, made the remarks in response to a question about the IAEA's review of Japan's discharge plan at routine press briefing. An IAEA task force established to review the safety of Japan's plans to discharge the water treated by the ALPS (Advanced Liquid Processing System) at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power station into the sea has recently released its third report.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202301/1283175.shtml>

Xi tells Marcos that China is ready to restart oil exploration talks

Cliff Venzon and Pak Yiu

Nikkei Asia, January 04, 2023

Chinese President Xi Jinping told visiting Philippine counterpart Ferdinand Marcos Jr. that Beijing is ready to restart discussions on joint oil and gas exploration, as the two sides remain at odds over the South China Sea. "China is willing to continue to work with the Philippines to properly deal with maritime issues in a friendly and consultative manner, restart negotiations on oil and gas development, promote cooperation on oil and gas development in non-disputed areas, and develop cooperation on green energy such as photovoltaic, wind energy and new-energy vehicles," China's Foreign Ministry said in a translated account of Xi's comments. Xi met with Marcos, who is on a state visit to Beijing, as the leaders aimed to lay the groundwork for stronger bilateral relations despite lingering friction over the vital waterway.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/South-China-Sea/Xi-tells-Marcos-that-China-is-ready-to-restart-oil-exploration-talks>

Chinese battery makers strengthen grip on global supply

Harry Dempsey and Gloria Li

Financial Times, January 04, 2023

Chinese battery manufacturers have extended their dominance over global supply, with the top two producers reaching a combined market share of 50 per cent, and leaving South Korean and Japanese rivals lagging behind. CATL, supplier to carmakers including Tesla and Volkswagen, more than doubled battery sales to 165.7 gigawatt hours in the 11 months to the end of November, according to data from Korea's SNE Research — enough for roughly 3.3mn average-sized electric vehicles. That extends the company's lead as the world's biggest producer and takes its market share to 37.1 per cent, up from 32.2 per cent in 2021.

<https://www.ft.com/content/0d2553ad-e512-4979-af1b-39d08397de82>

China-Taiwan: Concern at repair of Taiwanese military device in China

Fan Wang

BBC, January 04, 2023

There are calls for greater safeguards in Taiwan after at least one device used by the military for its missiles was sent for repair in China. An optical instrument used for launch measurements for Taiwan's Hsiung-Feng III anti-ship missiles was shipped to its manufacturer in Europe. It was then sent back to Taiwan from Shandong province in eastern China, Taiwanese media reported. Last year Beijing intensified military activity around the island. China sees Taiwan as part of its territory and has vowed to unify to it by force if necessary. Self-ruled Taiwan sees itself as distinct from the mainland. President Tsai Ing-wen has announced new plans to bolster Taiwan's defence in the event of an attack from Beijing, including extending mandatory military service from four months to one year.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-64161966>

China, Philippines ink updated MoU on BRI to boost cooperation in infrastructure, other areas

Yin Yeping

Global Times, January 05, 2023

During President Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos Jr of the Philippines' three-day visit to China, China and the Philippines signed a total of 14 cooperation documents. One of the major documents was an updated Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) with a focus on bilateral cooperation in infrastructure projects. The two countries first signed the MoU on the BRI in November 2018 and the updated version will further promote closer BRI cooperation, which will underpin the expansion of economic and trade cooperation between the two countries, Chinese experts noted. In terms of broad bilateral cooperation, during the visit, the two countries also vowed cooperation in various areas ranging from energy to agriculture, where the potential for collaboration is huge.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202301/1283278.shtml>

Chinese researchers claim to find way to break encryption using quantum computers

Richard Waters

Financial Times, January 05, 2023

Computer security experts were struggling this week to assess a startling claim by Chinese researchers that they have found a way to break the most common form of online encryption using the current generation

of quantum computers, years before the technology was expected to pose a threat. The method, outlined in a scientific paper published in late December, could be used to break the RSA algorithm that underpins most online encryption using a quantum machine with only 372 qubits — or quantum bits, a basic unit of quantum computing — according to the claims from 24 researchers from a number of academic bodies and state laboratories.

<https://www.ft.com/content/b15680c0-cf31-448d-9eb6-b30426c29b8b>

China, Philippines to resume oil and gas cooperation in S.China Sea, properly manage differences: joint statement

Wan Hengyi

Global Times, January 05, 2023

Following a candid meeting between leaders of China and the Philippines, the two sides issued a joint statement, highlighting the resumption of oil and gas cooperation in the South China Sea as well as the establishment of a diplomatic communication mechanism to resolve maritime issues. Experts said the joint statement, which underscored the importance of maintaining good momentum in bilateral ties, shows the determination of both sides to jointly manage differences and prioritize bilateral cooperation, which not only benefits the two peoples, but also contributes to regional stability. The joint statement followed a candid face-to-face meeting between the two leaders. At the invitation of Chinese President Xi Jinping, Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., President of the Philippines, paid a state visit to China.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202301/1283294.shtml>

Chinese military on alert as US destroyer transits Taiwan Strait in first new year sailing

Kawala Xie

South China Morning Post, January 06, 2023

The Chinese military were placed on alert as an American warship transited the Taiwan Strait, the first such crossing in two months in what the US Navy terms “routine” operations. The People’s Liberation Army followed and monitored the guided-missile destroyer Chung-hoon’s passage through the strait, and “all movements were under control”, the PLA Eastern Theatre Command said, without specifying the service branches involved. The crossing also prompted criticism from Beijing’s embassy in the United States.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3205813/chinese-military-alert-us-destroyer-transits-taiwan-strait-first-new-year-sailing>

China Uses US Tech for Their Weapons...Again

SOFREP, January 06, 2023

The fast growth of Beijing's nuclear forces has been enabled by American nuclear and missile technology acquired by Chinese spies and US space and nuclear cooperation in the 1990s, according to an overview of Chinese technology records and internal US government documents. The Pentagon reported last month that by 2035, China's arsenal of strategic nuclear warheads would reach a minimum of 1,500, up from 200 only a few years ago and 400 warheads presently. Adm. Charles Richard, the former commander of the US nuclear forces, highlighted the Chinese nuclear development last month by informing Congress that the size of Chinese nuclear forces for the first time surpasses that of the United States in one of three particular areas – warheads, long-range missiles or launchers.

<https://sofrep.com/news/china-uses-us-tech-for-their-weapons-again/>

Taiwan plans domestic satellite champion to resist any China attack

Kathrin Hille

Financial Times, January 06, 2023

Taiwan is courting investors to help it establish its own satellite communications provider, inspired by the role Elon Musk's Starlink has played in the war in Ukraine, as Taipei boosts efforts to fortify itself against a potential assault from China. Taiwan is in preliminary talks with several domestic and international investors to raise funds for the project, which the country's space agency, known as TASA, wants to spin out of an existing satellite division, according to three people familiar with the situation. "We are going to spin our low-Earth orbit satellite communications project off into a company," said a senior official at TASA.

<https://www.ft.com/content/07c6e48b-5068-4231-8dcf-fe15cb3d0478>

Chinese navy drills reveal greater ability to project power deeper into Pacific, analysts say

Kristin Huang

South China Morning Post, January 07, 2023

The Chinese military is seen to have increased its capacity to project naval power deeper into the Pacific, following displays of improved operational skills and survivability of its aircraft carrier strike groups beyond the South China Sea. The assessment from analysts came as the Chinese navy completed two massive drills led by its Liaoning and Shandong aircraft carriers in the western Pacific and the South China

Sea, respectively. The Liaoning, which was China's first-ever carrier when it launched in 2012, led a strike group of five warships – the guided-missile cruisers Anshan and Wuxi, guided-missile destroyer Chengdu, the frigate Zhaozhuang and support ship Hulunhu.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3205906/chinese-navy-drills-reveal-greater-ability-project-power-deeper-pacific-analysts-say>

US military deepens ties with Japan and Philippines over China threats

Kathrin Hille

Financial Times, January 09, 2023

The US and Japanese armed forces are rapidly integrating their command structure and scaling up operations as Washington and its Asian allies prepare for a possible conflict with China, according to the top US Marine Corps general in Japan. The two militaries have “seen exponential increases . . . just over the last year” in their operations on the territory they would have to defend in case of a war, Lieutenant General James Bierman, commanding general of the Third Marine Expeditionary Force and of Marine Forces Japan, told the Financial Times in an interview.

<https://www.ft.com/content/5f5981c6-8ec4-4241-9abf-2bd9fcfc4b8#post-b065dfea-01a2-4d5b-86ba-4b3bdd6c3ab9>

Chinese 'wolf warrior' Zhao leaves diplomatic spokesperson role

Nikkei Asia, January 09, 2023

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian, who gained prominence as one of China's most outspoken "wolf warrior" diplomats, has been transferred to the department that manages land and sea borders, according to the ministry's website. Zhao, 50, is now deputy head of the ministry's Department of Boundary and Ocean Affairs, the website showed. Zhao became a ministry spokesperson in 2020 after stints at China's embassy in Pakistan, where he built a large following on Twitter as well as on Chinese social media for his frequent and often combative posts, many targeted at the U.S.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/Chinese-wolf-warrior-Zhao-leaves-diplomatic-spokesperson-role>

US offers its allies more risks than benefits, making them unwilling followers

Sun Xihui

Global Times, January 09, 2023

As the US is engaging in strategic confrontation with Russia and China, its allies and partners are feeling increasing pressure. Against the backdrop of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, many European leaders are

dissatisfied with US' energy prices and discriminatory subsidies against Europe, and some EU member states have called for the lifting or gradual lifting of the sanctions against Russia. In the Asia-Pacific region, many US allies and partners are actively developing relations with China, unwilling to take sides between China and the US. Why has the US' appeal to its allies and partners declined? The US became the sole superpower after the Cold War, promoting a unipolar world led by itself. Based on such a concept, the US has actively intervened in global affairs and wooed allies to suppress Russia and China, aiming at consolidating its global hegemony at all costs.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202301/1283498.shtml>

3,600 American Cruise Missiles Versus The Chinese Fleet: How One U.S. Munition Could Decide Taiwan's Fate

David Axe

Forbes, January 09, 2023

A Chinese attack on Taiwan could trigger a war involving two million Chinese troops, half a million Taiwanese troops and the combined fleets and air forces of the United States and Japan. China has some key advantages going into this possible ultra-mega war. Compared to China, Taiwan is tiny, less wealthy on a national level and isolated. China can mass its best troops, ships and planes along a short geographic front and attack at the time of its choosing. The Chinese People's Liberation Army Rocket Force has aimed thousands of missiles at the closest American and Japanese bases. To intervene, U.S. and Japanese forces must fight their way through these missiles as well as the PLA Navy's submarines.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/davidaxe/2023/01/09/3600-american-cruise-missiles-versus-the-chinese-fleet-how-one-us-munition-could-decide-taiwans-fate/?sh=165cc0187da7>

What the West Doesn't Know About China's Silicon Valley

Jennifer Conrad

Wired, January 09, 2023

In the West, coverage of China's tech industry often focuses on how it is restricted or controlled by the government. In Ning's telling, the innovators of Zhongguancun helped "liberate" the Chinese people from the strictures of a fully state-run economy by carving out a path for entrepreneurship as the country tentatively opened up. When the first tech companies were established in Zhongguancun in early 1980s, every industry was state-owned, and every aspect of a person's life was dictated by their danwei, or work unit, from where they lived to whom they married. When an entrepreneur named Wang Hongde left his research position at the Chinese Academy of Sciences in 1982 to start an IT company, taking several colleagues with him, it "tore a crack in the old system," Ning says.

<https://www.wired.com/story/what-the-west-doesnt-know-about-chinas-silicon-valley/>

Taiwan condemns China for latest combat drills near island

Nikkei Asia, January 09, 2023

Taiwan condemned China for holding its second military combat drills around the island in less than a month, with the defence ministry saying it had detected 57 Chinese aircraft. China views democratically-governed Taiwan as its own territory and has been ramping up military, political and economic pressure to assert those claims. The Eastern Theatre Command of the People's Liberation Army said its forces held "joint combat readiness patrols and actual combat drills" in the sea and airspace around Taiwan, focused on land strikes and sea assaults. The aim was to test joint combat capabilities and "resolutely counter the provocative actions of external forces and Taiwan independence separatist forces," it added in a brief statement.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/Taiwan-tensions/Taiwan-condemns-China-for-latest-combat-drills-near-island>

China-Pakistan joint drills strengthen ties, enhance interoperability between the two navies: GT exclusive interview with Pakistani naval chief

Liu Xuanzun

Global Times, January 09, 2023

The Pakistan Navy plans to host the AMAN-23 multinational maritime exercise in February 2023, with the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy, having taken part in previous editions, are again expected to participate. China and Pakistan have been maintaining close naval and maritime exchanges and cooperation in recent years, including joint drills, enhanced by Pakistan's procurement of four advanced Type 054A/P frigates from China.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202301/1283501.shtml>

Chinese navy warship spotted in South Pacific may have been on high seas resupply trial run: analysts

Liu Zhen

South China Morning Post, January 09, 2023

A People's Liberation Army warship's solo trip deep into the South Pacific is believed to have been a test of the Chinese navy's refuelling and supply capacity at sea. The PLA Navy's guided-missile destroyer Yinchuan (hull number 175) had been sailing near the exclusive economic zone of New Caledonia, a French

overseas territory in the South Pacific, about 1,500km east of Australia, according to a French defence ministry tweet on December 29. French navy jets tracked and photographed the warship's activities, it said.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3206010/chinese-navy-warship-spotted-south-pacific-may-have-been-high-seas-resupply-trial-run>

China wraps up two-year tech crackdown, top official says

Liu Ran and Han Wei

Nikkei Asia, January 09, 2023

China's more than two-year clampdown on its sprawling internet sector is coming to an end, according to a top central bank official. The special campaign to rectify 14 internet platform companies' financial businesses is basically complete with few remaining issues to resolve, said Guo Shuqing, Chinese Communist Party secretary of the People's Bank of China (PBOC). Further supervision of the sector will be normalized, and support will be given to help platform companies play a bigger role in job creation and global competition, said Guo, who is also chairman of the China Banking and Insurance Regulatory Commission (CBIRC). The statement was the first signal from a top regulatory official that the government is winding down a massive clampdown that affected the country's biggest internet companies including Alibaba Group and Tencent Holdings.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Caixin/China-wraps-up-two-year-tech-crackdown-top-official-says>

US looks to deter China by sprinkling missile-armed marines across Japanese islands

South China Morning Post, January 10, 2023

The United States wants to disperse its marines throughout Japan's Okinawa islands by 2026, arming them with missiles and lighter gear to deter China's military, according to reports. The US has already told Japan about the reorganisation, which it will announce after a two-plus-two meeting in Washington between Japan's ministers of defence and foreign affairs and their US counterparts, the Yomiuri newspaper reported. Officials at Japan's defence ministry were unavailable for comment. A foreign ministry official declined to comment on the report, but said Japan and the US "will discuss matters regarding issues on the US Forces Japan, including the realignment of the US Forces Japan". Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told a regular briefing that bilateral military cooperation between the US and Japan "should not harm the interests of third parties and regional peace and stability."

<https://www.scmp.com/news/asia/east-asia/article/3206221/us-looks-deter-china-sprinkling-japanese-islands-missile-armed-marines>

War game instigates US intervention in possible Taiwan Straits conflict

Liu Xuanzun

Global Times, January 10, 2023

A recent war game scenario run by the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) is not worthy of reference, as it was designed to hype the "China threat" theory, and to suggest the US should fully arm the island of Taiwan preemptively, and instigate the US military to immediately intervene if a conflict breaks out, Chinese mainland experts said. The US think tank said the simulations indicate the US, Japan and the island of Taiwan would suffer huge losses in defeating the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) if a conflict breaks out in the Taiwan Straits in 2026. From a technical point of view, the simulations are biased and set under a scenario of wishful thinking, as they underestimated the PLA's capabilities and overestimated US and Japanese forces, analysts said.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202301/1283579.shtml>

Japan to expand island military base near Taiwan after China's missile drills

Julian Ryall

South China Morning Post, January 10, 2023

Japan is expanding a military base on a tiny island east of Taiwan months after the Chinese military's ballistic missiles landed near its shores last year, rattling locals amid worsening regional military tensions. Yonaguni, a remote outpost of Japan's southern Okinawa prefecture, is located 110km from Taiwan and is near the Diaoyu Islands, a group of islands claimed by Beijing but administered by Tokyo as the Senkakus. In August, Yonaguni's 1,700 residents were shocked when six Chinese missiles fell just off its shores, in waters Tokyo considers to be within Japan's exclusive economic zone.

<https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3206121/japan-expand-military-base-near-taiwan-over-chinas-military-moves>

China's new foreign minister Qin Gang embarks on Africa tour

Tsukasa Hadano

Nikkei Asia, January 10, 2023

Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang kicked off a tour of five African nations, his first official trip overseas since being appointed to the post late last month. Qin will visit Ethiopia, Gabon, Angola, Benin and Egypt, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin told reporters Monday. The trip lasts through January 16 and will include a visit to the African Union headquarters. Chinese foreign ministers have started the year with a visit to Africa for 33 consecutive years, Wang said. "This shows how much China values its traditional friendship with Africa and the growth of China-Africa relations," he said.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/China-s-new-foreign-minister-Qin-Gang-embarks-on-Africa-tour>

*Sylloge on China is compiled by Mr. Niranjan C. Oak
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**Nuclear and Arms Control Centre, MP-IDSA
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