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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

Top scientists call for closer global cooperation in countering AI risks at industry forum in Beijing

Shen Weiduo

Global Times, June 11, 2023

Amidst the current artificial intelligence (AI) boom triggered by ChatGPT that is sweeping the globe, leading scientists from across the world have again raised their concerns over the potential uncontrolled risks associated with the technology during an industry conference held in Beijing over the weekend. While highlighting the possible productivity enhancements that ChatGPT and similar AI can bring, some experts are advocating for international collaboration to establish a robust legal framework to govern the technology.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202306/1292358.shtml>

China raises nuclear arsenal by 60 warheads: think tank

Nikkei Asia, June 12, 2023

China increased its nuclear arsenal by 60 warheads to 410 in the 12 months to January 2023, an international security think tank said Monday, adding that the increase was more than in any of the other nine nuclear-armed states. The significant expansion of China's nuclear arsenal was "increasingly difficult to square" with the country's "declared aim of having only the minimum nuclear forces needed to maintain its national security," Hans Kristensen, associate senior fellow at SIPRI, said in the report.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/Defense/China-raises-nuclear-arsenal-by-60-warheads-think-tank>

Experts refute foreign speculations, accusations about China's nuclear arsenal modernization

Liu Xuanzun

Global Times, June 12, 2023

Chinese experts refuted foreign speculations and accusations on China's nuclear arsenal modernization program. They emphasized that China having a credible nuclear force contributes to global peace and stability amidst global tensions and pressure from the United States. According to SIPRI's estimates, China's nuclear arsenal size increased from 350 warheads in January 2022 to 410 in January 2023. The think tank expects this number to continue growing.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202306/1292440.shtml>

Japan making missiles to sink China's hypersonic threat

Gabriel Honrada

Asia Times, June 12, 2023

The growing missile threat from China and North Korea, alongside the limitations of current missile defenses, may have prompted Japan to invest in long-range pre-emptive strike capabilities, with the missile threat posed by China now evolving with a maritime dimension. Asia Times noted in May 2022 that China alone has 1,900 ground-launched intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBM) and 300 intermediate-range cruise missiles pointed at Japan. North Korea also has hundreds of ballistic missiles that can strike Japan.

<https://asiatimes.com/2023/06/japan-making-missiles-to-sink-chinas-hypersonic-threat/>

US cracks down on flight training for Chinese military pilots with export restrictions

South China Morning Post, June 13, 2023

The Biden administration added 43 entities to an export control list, including Frontier Services Group Ltd, a security and aviation company previously run by Erik Prince, for training Chinese military pilots and other activities that threaten US national security. In addition to recruiting Western pilots to train People's Liberation Army pilots on Western aircraft manoeuvres, companies were added to the list for acquiring US-origin items in support of China's military modernisation, including hypersonic weapons development and hypersonic flight modelling, the Commerce Department said in a release.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/world/united-states-canada/article/3223853/us-cracks-down-flight-training-chinese-military-pilots-export-restrictions>

China, France to forge stronger space cooperation with new satellite program to hunt for gamma-ray bursts

Deng Xiaoci and Huang Lanlan

Global Times, June 13, 2023

As the second satellite-related cooperation between China and France, the Space-based multi-band astronomical Variable Objects Monitor (SVOM) which is jointly developed by the China National Space Administration (CNSA) and the Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales (CNES), France's space agency, has come to the final assembly, integration and test (AIT) stage in Shanghai. It is expected to launch into space in 2024 Spring. Global Times has learned from Chinese and French engineers working on the cooperative frontline.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202306/1292479.shtml>

Orbital hypersonic delivery systems threaten strategic stability

Ritwik Gupta

Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, June 13, 2023

In late November 2022, the Pentagon released some details about China's new system, reporting that the glide vehicle traveled almost 25,000 miles during its 2021 test and reached hypersonic speeds. The system fit all the characteristics of a fractional orbital bombardment system, an old Soviet technique built to defeat American missile-defense radars in the Arctic Circle but never before paired with a hypersonic glide vehicle.

<https://thebulletin.org/2023/06/orbital-hypersonic-delivery-systems-threaten-strategic-stability/>

China could potentially have as many ICBMs as U.S. or Russia by turn of decade: SIPRI

Dinakar Peri

The Hindu, June 13, 2023

The size of China's nuclear arsenal increased from 350 warheads in January 2022 to 410 in January 2023, and it is expected to keep growing, according to estimations by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). "Depending on how it decides to structure its forces, China could potentially have at least as many intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) as either the U.S. or Russia by the turn of the decade, the stockholm-based think tank said in its annual assessment released said.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/china-could-potentially-have-as-many-icbms-as-us-or-russia-by-turn-of-decade-sipri/article66961196.ece>

China's pressure on 'weakest link' South Korea falls flat amid tensions with US

Christian Davies and Joe Leahy

Financial Times, June 13, 2023

The announcement, which followed a diplomatic breakthrough between Seoul and Tokyo this year, risks stoking anger in Beijing, which has discouraged South Korea from closer economic and defence ties with the US and Japan — a longstanding effort that now appears to be floundering. "China has long considered South Korea to be the weakest link of the US's alliances in Asia because of its internal divisions over the North Korea issue and its historic problems with Japan," said Jaewoo Choo, head of the China Center at the Korea Research Institute for National Security think-tank.

<https://www.ft.com/content/48a93738-69c1-4e76-bc08-3aebff64dd6c>

Putin signs law ratifying gas supplies to China through Far Eastern route; energy tie 'set to be closer'

Global Times, June 14, 2023

Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a law ratifying an intergovernmental agreement with China on cooperation in the field of natural gas, allowing supplies to be exported from Russia to China via the Far East route, TASS reported. Official implementation of the agreement is no doubt beneficial for both Russia and China, and will lead to strengthened, stable energy ties between the two nations amid uncertainties, observers said.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202306/1292534.shtml>

Commerce blacklists firms selling U.S. technology for Chinese hypersonics

Cate Cadell

The Washington Post, June 14, 2023

The Biden administration this week escalated its efforts to scupper the sale of U.S. technology to the Chinese military by blacklisting more than 30 Chinese companies, including a network of resellers that provided advanced American technology to the Chinese hypersonic weapons program and several entities involved in training Chinese military pilots using Western resources.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2023/06/14/china-hypersonic-missile-technology-blacklist/>

Alarm bells should be ringing for South Korea as chip exports tumble

Hu Weijia

Global Times, June 15, 2023

Although the US may loosen restrictions on South Korean chipmakers which want to maintain or expand their operations in China, it will be not enough to allow some breathing space for South Korea's semiconductor industry. The sharp deterioration in South Korea's chip exports reminds the country of the need to take serious action to protect their own interests from Washington's chip war, and, more importantly, to strengthen industry chain cooperation with China. China is a big market for South Korea semiconductor firms Samsung Electronics Co and SK Hynix Inc and home to some of their factories. China accounts for 40 percent of Samsung's total flash memory chips (NAND) production capability, CNBC reported.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202306/1292672.shtml>

US-China lessons from Ukraine: Fueling more dangerous Taiwan tensions

John K. Culver and Sarah Kirchberger

Atlantic Council, June 15, 2023

In light of the Chinese military's threatening gestures, belligerent rhetoric, and other recent actions that read like they could be preparation for war, there is a danger that the successive warnings by senior US military commanders that Chinese CCP General Secretary and President Xi Jinping has already decided to use military force in the near term could become the proverbial tail wagging the dog — and could impose a logic that makes a US-China war more likely, rather than enhancing deterrence. Therefore, the key question for the United States and its allies is how an increasingly truculent and belligerent Chinese leadership can be incentivized to walk back from the brink.

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/report/us-china-lessons-from-ukraine/>

What it will take to deter China in the Taiwan strait

David Sacks and Ivan Kanapathy

Foreign Affairs, June 15, 2023

For half a century, peace has held in the Taiwan Strait. This has been due to a combination of creative diplomacy, military deterrence, and self-restraint on the part of China, Taiwan and the United States. But the factors that kept the peace in previous decades may not continue to do so in the future. The sources of instability are growing in one of the world's most dangerous hot spots: diplomacy is fraying, deterrence is eroding, and China's risk tolerance is increasing.

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/china/what-it-will-take-deter-china-taiwan-strait>

Commercialization of 6G expected to be realized around 2030 in China: observers

Global Times, June 15, 2023

China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) ratcheted up efforts to promote the comprehensive development of 6G on June 4 at PT Expo China. The ministry said 6G will almost certainly lead the Chinese economy to a much higher level, and open up a brand-new cyber landscape. China has rolled out the world's largest and also most advanced 5G network. New forms of industrial internet integration are flourishing. The information and communication industry has effectively driven the transformation of the real economy, according to MIIT.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202306/1292640.shtml>

China Space Station rolls out first-ever extravehicular radiation biology experiment payload to accumulate key supporting data for future manned moon landings

Deng Xiaoci

Global Times, June 15, 2023

The China Space Station has successfully rolled out its first extravehicular radiation biology experimental payload outside Mengtian lab module, which is a device designed to study biological experiments under space exposure, and relevant tests have been carried out, the Global Times learned from the National Space Science Center (NSSC) under the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202306/1292639.shtml>

China gives green light to nuclear reactor that burns thorium – a fuel that could power the country for 20,000 years

Stephen Chen

South China Morning Post, June 15, 2023

China's nuclear safety watchdog has issued an operational permit for the nation's first thorium reactor, marking a significant milestone in the country's pursuit of advanced nuclear technologies. The reactor, a two-megawatt liquid-fuelled thorium molten salt reactor (MSR), is located in the Gobi Desert city of Wuwei in Gansu province and is operated by the Shanghai Institute of Applied Physics of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/science/article/3224183/china-gives-green-light-nuclear-reactor-burns-thorium-fuel-could-power-country-20000-years>

US should stop undermining China's interests under guise of 'competition': Chinese FM

Zhang Han

Global Times, June 16, 2023

The US needs to give up the illusion of dealing with China "from a position of strength," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said, urging Washington to stop undermining China's sovereignty, security and development interests under the guise of "competition." China views and handles its relations with the US in accordance with the three principles of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation, Wang said at routine press briefing.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202306/1292716.shtml>

China tightens controls on cross-border data transfers

Qian Tong and Wang Xintong

Nikkei Asia, June 16, 2023

China is putting cross-border data transfers by multinational companies and others under the toughest government oversight ever. China's upper legislative framework for governing data security consists of three laws -- the Cybersecurity Law, the Data Security Law and the Personal Information Protection Law - and a series of government regulations backed by the laws. Under the laws, the central government has established its personal data export regulatory regime.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Caixin/China-tightens-controls-on-cross-border-data-transfers>

Trilateral meeting of US, Japan, S.Korea hypes 'China threat,' destabilizes region: analysts

Liu Xin and Fan Wei

Global Times, June 16, 2023

The latest trilateral meeting of senior security advisors from the US, Japan and South Korea showed an alarming trend of interfering with China's domestic affairs and inciting confrontations with small cliques by hyping "China threat" theory on the South China Sea and the Taiwan question, analysts said. They also said that the US and Japan see China's rise as a huge threat and do not believe they can handle it by themselves. This is why they have beefed up efforts to pull in allies, forming small cliques with South Korea, the Philippines and Australia to contain China.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202306/1292727.shtml>

New parachute system could ease some of China's rocket-debris issues

Andrew Jones

Space, June 17, 2023

A new parachute system could reduce the risk posed by Chinese satellite launches from inland spaceports. Earlier this month, the China Academy of Launch Vehicle Technology (CALT) published footage of a parachute system deploying from a spent rocket booster used to help launch a Beidou navigation satellite on May 17. The parachute system is designed to give more control over where the rocket booster lands. The parafoil automatically opens at a set altitude during descent, helping guide the booster back to a predetermined landing area.

<https://www.space.com/china-rocket-debris-issues-parachute-system>

Foreign envoys praise China-proposed BRI, refute slander from West

Hu Weijia

Global Times, June 17, 2023

Foreign envoys wholeheartedly praised the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) at an investment forum in Beijing, highlighting the fruitful outcomes it has brought to their countries and businesses over the past 10 years since its initiation in 2013, while refuting the politically driven slander against it from the West. The fruits of the BRI are clear. In the past decade, China has signed more than 200 Belt and Road cooperation documents with 151 countries and 32 international organizations, forming more than 3,000 cooperation projects, according to media reports.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202306/1292735.shtml>

China plans to build star-wars type super warship equivalent to an entire carrier fleet

Marine Insight, June 17, 2023

In a research paper published on 13th June in the academic journal ‘Transactions of China Electrotechnical Society’, the country’s top naval scientist, researcher and developer, Rear Admiral Ma Weiming, revealed the blueprint of a futuristic warship that would revolutionise naval warfare. He claims it would be different from any other naval ship in the world, laden with new technologies and capabilities. This futuristic vessel would challenge conventional naval formations and naval warfare spanning over a century, mentioned Ma.

<https://www.marineinsight.com/shipping-news/china-plans-to-build-star-wars-type-super-warship-equivalent-to-an-entire-carrier-fleet/>

Blinken arrives in Beijing on mission to cool U.S.-China tensions

nbc news, June 18, 2023

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrived in Beijing on a high-stakes diplomatic mission to try to cool exploding U.S.-China tensions that have set many around the world on edge. Blinken was to begin two days of talks with senior Chinese officials in the afternoon. He is the highest-level American official to visit China since President Joe Biden took office and the first secretary of state to make the trip in five years.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/blinken-arrives-beijing-mission-cool-us-china-tensions-rcna89908>

Premier Li kicks off trip to Germany, France; China, Europe 'need each other for multipolar world order'

Yang Sheng

Global Times, June 18, 2023

Chinese Premier Li Qiang kicked off on Sunday his five-day trip to Germany and France, two major European powers and leading members of the EU. On the same day, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrived in Beijing for a visit that was long-expected by the US side.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202306/1292798.shtml>

China 'deplores' UK security minister's meeting with Taiwanese minister

The Korea Times, June 18, 2023

The Chinese embassy in London condemned a meeting last week between Britain's security minister, Tom Tugendhat, and Taiwan's digital minister, saying it violated international relations. China considers democratically governed Taiwan as part of its territory and fiercely objects to perceived foreign interference with the island. "This move seriously violates the one-China principle and the basic norms of international relations," a spokesperson for the Chinese embassy in London said in a statement.

https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/world/2023/06/501_353200.html

Xi Jinping's dream of a Chinese military-industrial complex

Edward White and Sun Yu

Financial Times, June 19, 2023

Their swift advancement is part of Xi's efforts to reinvigorate China's long-running project of "military-civil fusion", a policy that seeks to harness new technologies from the private sector for the benefit of the country's rapidly modernising military. Wu Guoguang, who worked as an adviser to the former Chinese premier Zhao Ziyang and is now with the Asia Society, a US think-tank, identifies five of 13 new members of the party's elite 24-member politburo appointed last year as representing "a new generation within the CCP leadership".

<https://www.ft.com/content/6f388e4b-9c4e-4ca3-8040-49962f1e155d>

China says its DF-27 Hypersonic Missile can travel 8,000km

Kris Osborn

Warrior Maven, June 19, 2023

China's long-range DF-27 hypersonic missile may be as mysterious as it is lethal, given how little is known or confirmed about its performance parameters. The Pentagon documented and reported existence of the Chinese missile has been documented and reported by the Pentagon, according to its 2021 annual China military report.

<https://wariormaven.com/china/china-says-its-df-27-hypersonic-missile-can-travel-8000km>

H-6K bombers conduct nighttime Taiwan island encirclement flights

Liu Xuanzun

Global Times, June 19, 2023

H-6K bombers of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Air Force have carried out nighttime sorties encircling the island of Taiwan, a move experts said will become routine and will send a warning to everyone who attempts to separate the island from China. The second air group under an aviation regiment of the PLA Air Force was the first unit to conduct nighttime Taiwan island encirclement flights since the commissioning of the H-6K bomber, China Central Television (CCTV) reported.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202306/1292849.shtml>

US expert calls for sanctioning Chinese entities over N. Korea's missile program

Kang Hyun-kyung

The Korea Times, June 19, 2023

A former senior official at the U.S. National Security Council (NSC) called on the Joe Biden administration to impose sanctions on Chinese nationals, companies and banks that are aiding North Korea's procurement of components necessary for the research and production of ballistic missiles. He said the U.S. government needs to be tougher and build more pressure on China to choose between the U.S. and North Korea regarding whom to do business with.

https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2023/06/120_353195.html

Pakistan signs \$4.8 billion nuclear power plant deal with China

Ayaz Gul

Voice of America, June 20, 2023

Pakistan and China signed a \$4.8 billion deal to build what would be the seventh Chinese nuclear power plant in the South Asian nation. The 1,200-megawatt project will be installed in the central Pakistani city of Chashma, where Beijing already has built four nuclear power generation units with a collective output of nearly 1,230 megawatts. China has recently also constructed two nuclear power plants in the southern port city of Karachi, each with a 1,100-megawatt generation capacity.

<https://www.voanews.com/a/pakistan-signs-4-8-billion-nuclear-power-plant-deal-with-china/7144967.html>

The US military is hard to conquer China

Simon P Saragih S

Kompas, June 20, 2023

Jeremy Mark of Atlantic Council told CNBC on June 15, 2023, that the opposition towards China is currently the most solid from both Democrats and Republicans. However, if a war were to occur with China, including in defense of Taiwan, Mark stated, "The ability to wage war is simply a statement that is louder than reality." In the year 2023, where China also possesses nuclear power. It is unimaginable if both sides were to fight using their respective nuclear power. Therefore, it is true that the choice is peace.

<https://www.kompas.id/baca/english/2023/06/17/en-militer-as-sulit-menaklukkan-china>

*Sylloge on China is compiled by Mr. Niranjan C. Oak
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