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China's Science of Military Strategy 2013 [English Translation]

The China Aerospace Studies Institute (CASI) of the US Air University has released an English translation of the Science of Military Strategy (2013 edition), a capstone document on the People Republic of China's current military strategy. Prepared by the faculty of China's Academy of Military Sciences (AMS) under a very high-level review, this is the third edition of the text which was earlier published in 1987 and 2001.

Even though the various editions of the Science of Military Strategy do not reflect China's official military strategy, military strategic guidelines, or military doctrine, they do highlight the views of many of the leading strategists of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), some of whom are involved in the formulation of actual strategy and operational doctrine.



A copy of the 2013 edition of the Science of Military Strategy — in Chinese — was obtained by Secrecy News and posted online by the Federation of American Scientists in August 2015. The English translation makes it available to a wider audience. The book elaborates upon the major strategic issues relating to the build-up and application of force by the PLA in tune with the spirit of the Communist Party's instructions to push forward innovation in strategic theory and strengthen military guidance. It accords prominence to both military strategy in local war under informationised conditions and peacetime application of military force.

Composed of four parts, the book first delineates basic theory, then carries out an assessment of China's strategic circumstances, and then employs operations research to assess the planning for force application and build-up of military strength. It contains a comprehensive analysis of the military strategies of the major powers including the United States, Russia, Japan and India. With respect to India, the book argues that India's broad strategic concept "is to 'discourage' the United States, 'deter' China, and 'deal with' Pakistan. Of these, 'deterring' China is its focus, because it thinks that only by 'deterring' China will it be able to 'deal with' Pakistan and have the possibility of 'discouraging' the United States."

The book provides an important baseline for further examination of the approach of Chinese strategists to questions of strategy and understanding how China's military strategy might evolve.

South Korea's LPX-II Light Aircraft Carrier Programme

The South Korean Navy has officially confirmed the launch of its aircraft carrier programme designated 'LPX - II', which is expected to displace close to 30,000 tons. LPX-II is expected to be a larger version of the Dokdo-class amphibious assault ship, which displaces 19,500 tons and was commissioned into the Republic of Korea (RoK) Navy in 2007.

Though North Korea remains the primary threat for RoK, it is a less convincing reason for the development of an aircraft carrier that is expected to maintain close to 20 F-35B aircraft on board. Even for threats near the Korean peninsula, more cost-effective solutions are available. Therefore, the reason for RoK's development of the new carrier may be attributed to a combination of the country deciding to secure its own distant sea-lines of communication, the increasing threats that Chinese aircraft carriers could pose, the ongoing Japanese carrier programme, and finally the uncertainty that arose about America's security commitment during the Trump presidency.



Source: thedrive.com

South Korea's carrier design draws elements from Britain's Queen Elizabeth class of aircraft carriers, with dual islands and a launch ramp, indicating the involvement of Babcock International as design partners. Hyundai Heavy Industries is expected to commence construction this year, with the United States providing the technology for the reinforced flight deck as part of the F-35B purchase agreement.

With an estimated price tag of close to USD 2 billion, there have been discussions on the project's viability within and outside the government. Meanwhile, the South Korean Navy has in line many other major naval acquisition programmes for surface and undersea combatants that would be vying for prioritisation ahead of the LPX-II. These major naval platforms are required to complete the Carrier Battle Group, thus providing cover to the carrier while sailing in formation.

Turkey Plans to Land on the Moon

Turkey has recently announced an ambitious space agenda. It proposes to undertake a soft landing on the Moon in 2028 at an expected cost of more than USD 1 billion. President Erdogan's announcement includes an ambitious 10-year space programme that includes developing internationally viable satellite systems and sending Turkish astronauts to space.

The first step would be undertaking a hard landing on the Moon with a locally produced (albeit with international cooperation) hybrid rocket by 2023. 2023 is important because of the centenary of the Turkish Republic, which falls on 29 October. The second step would involve undertaking a soft landing on the Moon with Turkey's own capabilities. For this purpose, the country would be building a rocket launch site in Somalia. Technically, having a launch site close to the equator is advisable because it allows lifting more weight during launch. Somalia, located at the latitude of 5.1° N (approximately, 667 km north of the equator) appears to be a good choice. However, only time would tell whether Turkey is able to establish the massive structure required for a satellite launch site in a state that has been embroiled in internal conflict for many years.



Source: aa.com.tr

The Turkish Space Agency was formally established by a presidential decree only two years ago on December 13, 2018. However, the country's interest in space has a longer history. Its first satellite Türksat 1A, a communications satellite, was launched on January 24, 1994, although it failed to reach orbit due to the malfunction of the Arianespace rocket. Subsequently, Turkey has got seven communications and earth observation satellites launched, the last aboard the SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket on January 20, 2020.

Turkey is a member of the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization (APSCO) headquartered in Beijing and consisting of Bangladesh, Iran, Mongolia, Pakistan, Peru, and Thailand. Given that Turkey does not have indigenous rocket launch capabilities, there is a possibility that Turkey may get the required assistance from China to fulfil its Moon dream.