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SYLLOGE ON CHINA

Focus: Nuclear, Space, Missiles and other Security Issues

**An Initiative by the Nuclear and Arms Control Centre,
MP-IDSA**



PLA holds live-fire missile drill along southeastern coast, ‘warns secessionists, external forces’

Liu Xuanzun

People’s Daily, February 1, 2024

The Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) recently held a live-fire missile exercise along the southeastern coast where it can cover the Taiwan Straits, sending a warning to "Taiwan independence" secessionists and external interference forces, experts said. The navy of the PLA Eastern Theater Command recently conducted an all-element anti-ship missile assault exercise in an eastern coastal region in East China's Fujian Province, with several transporter erector launchers commencing live-fire missile attacks, China Central Television (CCTV) reported. A range of spontaneous situations were simulated during the exercise, including emergencies such as power disruptions and hostile air strikes, in order to train fast reaction capabilities.

<http://en.people.cn/n3/2024/0201/c90000-20129786.html>

US disabled Chinese hacking network targeting critical infrastructure

Christopher Bing and Karen Freifeld

Reuters, February 1, 2024

The U.S. government in recent months launched an operation to fight a pervasive Chinese hacking operation that successfully compromised thousands of internet-connected devices, according to two Western security officials and one person familiar with the matter. The Justice Department and Federal Bureau of Investigation sought and received legal authorization to remotely disable aspects of the Chinese hacking campaign, the sources told Reuters. Such breaches could enable China, national security experts said, to remotely disrupt important facilities in the Indo-Pacific region that in some form support or service U.S. military operations. Sources said U.S. officials are concerned the hackers were working to hurt U.S. readiness in case of a Chinese invasion of Taiwan.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-disabled-chinese-hacking-network-targeting-critical-infrastructure-sources-2024-01-29/>

China sets sights on Taiwan’s three remaining tiny Pacific allies

Michael E. Miller, Lily Kuo and Vic Chiang

The Washington Post, February 1, 2024

As China vies with the United States for power and influence in the Pacific, it has tirelessly tried to pry allies away from Taiwan by many means — chief among them, money. It has offered much-

needed funds to struggling island nations like Nauru, and allegedly doled out envelopes of cash to officials — an accusation Beijing denies. They have approached Pacific politicians as they travel overseas, inviting some to lunch and surveilling others. Two Pacific leaders said Chinese officials called to berate them so often they changed their numbers.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/02/01/china-taiwan-pacific-nauru-tuvalu/>

China's CXMT aims to build country's first advanced memory chips for AI

Cheng Ting-Fang

Nikkei Asia, February 1, 2024

ChangXin Memory Technologies (CXMT) is racing to produce China's first domestic high bandwidth memory, a critical component in artificial intelligence computing, as the country battles U.S. export controls and looks to reduce its reliance on foreign suppliers. CXMT has already ordered and received some manufacturing and test equipment from U.S. and Japanese suppliers that is suitable for assembling and producing HBM, sources with direct knowledge of the matter said.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Business/Tech/Semiconductors/China-s-CXMT-aims-to-build-country-s-first-advanced-memory-chips-for-AI>

Taiwan leader shouldn't be a puppet of US

Tommy Suen and Kacee Ting Wong

China Daily, February 2, 2024

Although Lai Ching-te has been elected the next leader of Taiwan, his pro-independence stance will further plunge the island into the vortex of Sino-US rivalry. Muddying the political waters further is some US politicians' elusive attempt to build "collective deterrence" against a manufactured delusion of the Chinese mainland's military threat to Taiwan. That the pro-independence movement in Taiwan poses a serious threat to the core national interests of Beijing and the Chinese people as a whole is evident to all. "Taiwan independence" is regarded by Beijing as a serious threat to the Chinese nation.

<https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202402/02/WS65bc241da3104efcbdae9369.html>

Requirements for nuclear deterrence and arms control in a two-nuclear-peer environment

Greg Weaver and Amy Woolf

Atlantic Council, February 2, 2024

China's rapid nuclear buildup is comprehensive, including both strategic and theater-range forces and the addition of an array of new capabilities. China is fielding a triad of strategic nuclear delivery systems, adopting a launch under attack (LUA) posture for its inter-continental ballistic missile (ICBM) force, and has tested potentially destabilizing new intercontinental range systems (e.g., fractional or multiple orbital bombardment systems [FOBS/MOBS] that could threaten a potentially unwarned preemptive attack on the United States). For the first time, China is developing survivable theater nuclear forces capable of conducting low-yield precision strikes on US and allied/partner forces and infrastructure across East Asia.

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/report/requirements-for-nuclear-deterrence-and-arms-control-in-a-two-peer-nuclear-peer-environment/>

Int'l scientists conduct joint experiments with China's "artificial sun" team

Xinhua, February 2, 2024

As the Chinese New Year approaches, a small island in the northwest suburb of Hefei, capital of east China's Anhui Province, is buzzing not because of the fireworks, but because of the operation of the Experimental Advanced Superconducting Tokamak (EAST), also known as the "Chinese artificial sun." Before the upcoming Spring Festival, which falls on February 10, over 100 Chinese and foreign scientists conducted EAST-ITER (International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor) joint physics experiments on the "Science Island," which is home to EAST. The purpose of these experiments was to address relevant technical problems for the international nuclear fusion research and engineering megaproject ITER.

<https://english.news.cn/20240202/dbfc286699e846b9ba22ee395ed57fae/c.html>

'Gutter-level' talk: China-Philippines discord deepens over Taiwan

A. Anantha Lakshmi and Kathrin Hille

Financial Times, February 2, 2024

After Taiwan's presidential election last month, China was quick to rebuke the countries that congratulated the winner, Lai Ching-te, who Beijing has labelled a separatist. But it reserved its strongest condemnation for the Philippines, admonishing the country "not to play with fire" and its president to "read more books" to understand the dispute over Taiwan — comments Manila

described as “low and gutter-level” talk. The bitter exchange marked the latest episode in an escalating dispute between China and the Philippines, which has taken a more assertive stance under President Ferdinand Marcos Jr against Beijing’s coercive actions in the disputed waters of the South China Sea.

<https://www.ft.com/content/f0246816-0bac-4754-b85e-b1a7a9f1da38>

China launches world's first in-orbit AI commercial hypersatellite

CGTN, February 3, 2024

China's Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center launched the world's first in-orbit artificial intelligence (AI) commercial hypersatellite on Saturday from waters off the coast of Yangjiang City in south China's Guangdong Province. A Smart Dragon-3 (SD-3) carrier rocket blasted off from the launch site, sending a group of nine satellites, including the AI commercial hypersatellite and a distant retrograde orbit (DRO) satellite, into planned orbit. In addition, the SD-03 sent the Egyptian NExSat-1 satellite into orbit this time as well, marking its first international payload launch. Developed by Guoxing Aerospace Technology Co., Ltd. in Chengdu City of southwest China's Sichuan Province, the AI commercial hypersatellite, named "Rongpiao" or "Xingshidai-18," is a new integrated sensing network satellite equipped with the company's sixth generation "satellite brain" system.

<https://news.cgtn.com/news/2024-02-03/China-launches-9-satellites-from-sea-including-one-DRO-satellite-1qTeeAIUbSM/p.html>

China rushes to homegrown AI chips as Nvidia cutoff expands

Takashi Kawakami

Nikkei Asia, February 3, 2024

As U.S. export restrictions make it increasingly difficult for Chinese artificial intelligence companies to get their hands on key Nvidia chips, they are turning to suppliers at home. Leading tech companies like Huawei Technologies have arisen as potential alternative suppliers, but concerns remain over whether their products can achieve the same performance. A limited number of Nvidia chips appear to be available on the Chinese market, having bypassed restrictions, but not enough to satisfy the AI development needs of major companies. Huawei has emerged as a possible alternative. Despite facing U.S. sanctions, the company released a smartphone in August equipped with advanced 7-nanometer chips that it developed with Chinese contract chip maker Semiconductor Manufacturing International Corp.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Business/Tech/Semiconductors/China-rushes-to-homegrown-AI-chips-as-Nvidia-cutoff-expands>

China launches Geely-02 satellites

Xinhua, February 3, 2024

China sent a group of 11 satellites into space from the Xichang Satellite Launch Center in southwestern Sichuan Province. Carried by a Long March-2C carrier rocket, the 11 Geely-02 constellation satellites took off from the launch site, and entered the preset orbit. This was the 508th flight mission of the Long March rocket series. The Long March-2C carrier rocket was developed by the China Academy of Launch Vehicle Technology, which is affiliated with the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation. It is a type of liquid launch vehicle capable of launching a single satellite, multiple satellites and satellite constellations in various configurations.

<https://english.news.cn/20240203/94b71becb50a4b8aae17f03f5cfcc2d6/c.html>

Fear and ambition propel Xi's nuclear acceleration

Chris Buckley

The New York Times, February 4, 2024

Nineteen days after taking power as China's leader, Xi Jinping convened the generals overseeing the country's nuclear missiles and issued a blunt demand. China had to be ready for possible confrontation with a formidable adversary, he said, signaling that he wanted a more potent nuclear capability to counter the threat. Their force, he told the generals, was a "pillar of our status as a great power." They must, Mr. Xi said, advance "strategic plans for responding under the most complicated and difficult conditions to military intervention by a powerful enemy," according to an official internal summary of his speech in December 2012 to China's nuclear and conventional missile arm, then called the Second Artillery Corps.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/04/world/asia/china-nuclear-missiles.html>

Chinese nuclear fuel engineer Li Guangchang caught in anti-corruption net targeting 'high-risk' areas

Amber Wang

South China Morning Post, February 4, 2024

A leading Chinese nuclear fuel engineer has been placed under investigation, becoming the latest case in Beijing's sweeping crackdown on corruption in "high-risk" areas such as energy and state-owned enterprises. Li Guangchang, a member of the science and technology committee of China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC), is suspected of committing serious violations of discipline

and law, the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) said in a statement on its website. He is undergoing disciplinary inspection and supervision, the ruling Communist Party's top corruption watchdog said, but did not offer details of the alleged violations.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3250877/chinese-nuclear-fuel-engineer-li-guangchang-latest-corruption-net-clean-drive-high-risk-areas>

How primed for war is China?

Michael Beckley and Hal Brands

Foreign Policy, February 4, 2024

How likely is China to start a war? This may be the single-most important question in international affairs today. If China uses military force against Taiwan or another target in the Western Pacific, the result could be war with the United States—a fight between two nuclear-armed giants brawling for hegemony in that region and the wider world. If China attacked amid ongoing wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, the world would be consumed by interlocking conflicts across Eurasia's key regions, a global conflagration unlike anything since World War II.

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/02/04/china-war-military-taiwan-us-asia-xi-escalation-crisis/>

China Mobile launches the world's first 6G test satellite

Ma Si

China Daily, February 5, 2024

China Mobile, the world's largest telecom carrier by mobile subscribers, has successfully launched the world's first satellite to test 6G architecture, marking a milestone in its efforts to explore integrated space and ground communication technology. The low-earth orbit test satellite is the world's first to employ 6G design architecture, and it was launched along with another satellite that comes with China Mobile's 5G technology. The 6G test satellite hosts a distributed autonomous architecture for 6G, which was jointly developed by China Mobile and the Chinese Academy of Sciences' Innovation Academy for Microsatellites.

<https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202402/05/WS65c078e3a3104efcbdae9c1c.html>

Beijing steps up commercial aerospace efforts

CGTN, February 5, 2024

The municipal government of Beijing is planning the establishment of a dedicated "Rocket Street" as a research and production hub for the advancement of commercial aerospace. It is part of the

capital city's ongoing endeavors to foster innovation in the industry. Beijing had laid out measures for the development of a satellite internet industry and provided support for 41 commercialization launch projects, with funding exceeding 100 million yuan (\$14.08 million), Jiang Guangzhi, director of Beijing Municipal Bureau of Economy and Information Technology, said at a conference.

<https://news.cgtn.com/news/2024-02-05/Beijing-steps-up-commercial-aerospace-efforts-1qWirCSpXag/p.html>

China bets on open-source chips as U.S. export controls mount

Eduardo Baptista

The Japan Times, February 5, 2024

When a Beijing-based military institute in September published a patent for a new high-performance chip, it offered a glimpse of China's bid to remake the half-trillion dollar global chip market and withstand U.S. sanctions. The People's Liberation Army's (PLA) Academy of Military Sciences had used an open-source standard known as RISC-V to reduce malfunctions in chips for cloud computing and smart cars, the patent filing shows. Beijing and dozens of Chinese state entities and research institutes, many sanctioned by Washington, invested at least \$50 million in projects involving RISC-V between 2018 and 2023, according to a Reuters review of over 100 Chinese-language academic articles, patents, government documents and tenders, as well as statements from research groups and companies.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2024/02/05/asia-pacific/politics/china-open-source-chips/>

China willing to join global efforts on AI ethics, governance

China Daily, February 6, 2024

China is willing to participate in global efforts to promote the ethics and governance of artificial intelligence so that it will benefit all mankind, a Chinese representative to a United Nations forum said. China's Vice-Minister of Education Wang Jiayi made the remarks at the Second Global Forum on the Ethics of AI, a two-day event sponsored by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in the Slovenian city of Kranj. Wang said the AI governance plans proposed by various countries reflect their hands-on experience and can provide a basis for gathering global consensus and jointly formulating global governance plans.

<https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202402/06/WS65c18f1da3104efcbdae9e48.html>

‘Nowhere to hide’: Chinese scientists develop game-changing military surveillance device for electronic warfare

Stephen Chen

South China Morning Post, February 6, 2024

An enemy in the battlefield will have “nowhere to hide” after Chinese scientists claim to have made a huge technological breakthrough in the field of electronic warfare. The team of scientists from Beijing said for the first time they have achieved seamless, wide bandwidth, real-time monitoring and analysis of the electromagnetic spectrum, leaving any enemy completely out in the open during a conflict. The Chinese military will be able to use this technology to detect and lock on to enemy signals at unprecedented speeds, decode the physical parameters of these signals almost instantly, and effectively suppress them – all while ensuring the smooth flow of their own communications, according to the researchers.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/science/article/3250752/nowhere-hide-chinese-scientists-develop-game-changing-military-surveillance-device-electronic>

PRC State-sponsored actors compromise and maintain persistent access to U.S. critical infrastructure

Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, February 7, 2024

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), National Security Agency (NSA), and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) assess that People’s Republic of China (PRC) state-sponsored cyber actors are seeking to pre-position themselves on IT networks for disruptive or destructive cyberattacks against U.S. critical infrastructure in the event of a major crisis or conflict with the United States. The U.S. authoring agencies have confirmed that the PRC state-sponsored cyber group known as Volt Typhoon has compromised the IT environments of multiple critical infrastructure organizations—primarily in Communications, Energy, Transportation Systems, and Water and Wastewater Systems Sectors—in the continental and non-continental United States and its territories, including Guam.

<https://www.cisa.gov/news-events/cybersecurity-advisories/aa24-038a>

U.S. engineer contacted China before stealing missile tracking tech, DOJ says

Dan Mangan

CNBC, February 7, 2024

Federal prosecutors charged Chenguang Gong who worked at a Los Angeles-area company with stealing trade secret technologies developed for use by the U.S. government in space to detect

nuclear missile launches and track ballistic and hypersonic missiles, the Department of Justice said. Gong, who lives in San Jose, California, is a native of China who became an American citizen in 2011, prosecutors said. Los Angeles U.S. Attorney Martin Estrada said Gong previously sought to provide the People's Republic of China with information that would help the nation's military. Gong, from 2014 through 2022, submitted multiple applications for so-called "talent programs" run by the Chinese government. The Chinese Talent Program Tracker is known to identify individuals located outside China who have skills and knowledge that can help transform the Chinese economy and bolster its military capabilities, the complaint said.

<https://www.cnb.com/2024/02/07/doj-us-engineer-contacted-china-before-stealing-missile-tech.html>

Xi's playbook for China is different from what U.S. thinks, scholars say

Ken Moriyasu

Nikkei Asia, February 7, 2024

When Adm. Philip Davidson told Congress in March 2021 that China may take military action against Taiwan "in the next six years," 2027 became known as the "Davidson timeline." The words of the then-leader of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command were perceived to be based on intelligence and dominated the discussions in Washington. Last week, U.S. President Joe Biden's pick to be the next Indo-Pacom commander, Adm. Samuel Paparo, told Congress that the 2027 timeline is "nothing other than the 100th anniversary of the People's Liberation Army," and that the U.S. military, in general, always must be ready to respond.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/Indo-Pacific/Xi-s-playbook-for-China-is-different-from-what-U.S.-thinks-scholars-say>

China opens Qinling Station for Antarctic scientific investigation

Zhao Chenchen

CGTN, February 7, 2024

China's fifth scientific outpost in the Antarctic, Qinling Station, was officially named and opened. Qinling station is the third Chinese research base in Antarctica able to operate all year, hosting up to 80 people in the summertime and 30 during wintertime. The new facility, constructed on the rocky, windswept Inexpressible Island near the Ross Sea of the Antarctic, utilizes an integrated spatial system and green technology given the unique environmental conditions at the site. As of 2024, China has built five Antarctic research stations, spanning over 30 years of research.

<https://news.cgtn.com/news/2024-02-07/China-s-5th-Antarctic-research-station-opens-1qZGvejlKz6/p.html>

Foreign Ministry Spokesperson on the allegation of cyber attacks from China in a report released by the "Five Eyes alliance"

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the People's Republic of China, February 8, 2024

We firmly oppose the US and other countries of “the Five Eyes alliance” smearing and attacking China without any evidence. Last May, countries of “the Five Eyes alliance” released a similar report discrediting China. Less than a year later, we see another “the Five Eyes alliance” production of the “Smear China” franchise, same made-up plot about “Chinese cyber attack”, same shoddiness. “The Five Eyes alliance” needs to know that falsely accusing China will not hide the fact that “the Five Eyes alliance” is the largest global intelligence agency and the US is the No.1 “hacking state” in the world.

https://www.mfa.gov.cn/eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/202402/t20240208_11243825.html

Xi and Putin reject US ‘interference’ and pledge closer industrial co-operation

Max Seddon and Joe Leahy

Financial Times, February 8, 2024

Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin have rejected US “interference” in their affairs and pledged to “maintain the stability” of industrial supply chains after trade between the two countries soared last year. Moscow and Beijing should “cultivate new momentum for co-operation”, Chinese state media quoted the president as telling his Russian counterpart in a call. “The two sides should strengthen strategic co-ordination, safeguard the national sovereignty, security and development interests of their respective countries, and resolutely oppose external interference in their internal affairs,” Xi said.

<https://www.ft.com/content/f41d3756-120f-4f2b-8df3-41ca14defe66>

US to launch \$5 billion research hub in China chips race

Mackenzie Hawkins

Bloomberg, February 9, 2024

President Joe Biden’s administration plans to launch a \$5 billion semiconductor research consortium to bolster chip design and hardware innovation in the US and counter China’s efforts to capture the cutting edge of the industry. Officials are working to prevent China from benefiting from NSTC-funded research while filling gaps in the US research ecosystem for key areas like packaging and hardware, she said, as electronic components have become a key US-China battleground. “They’re investing quite a few dollars on chip design and chip manufacturing in China right now, as our main competitor,” Locascio said.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-02-09/us-to-launch-5-billion-research-hub-to-stay-ahead-in-chip-race>

Thinking about the unthinkable: five nuclear weapons issues to address in 2024

Kelsey Hartigan

Centre for Strategic and International Studies, February 9, 2024

China's rapid expansion and diversification of its nuclear forces also demands attention in 2024. While the administration has made clear that "the United States does not need to increase our nuclear forces to outnumber the combined total of our competitors in order to successfully deter them," a number of recent high-profile commissions, reports, and studies argue for important changes to U.S. nuclear forces, setting up a renewed debate over what's driving China's nuclear buildup and whether and how the United States should respond.

<https://www.csis.org/analysis/thinking-about-unthinkable-five-nuclear-weapons-issues-address-2024>

U.S.-China tensions have a new front: a naval base in Africa

Michael M. Phillips

The Wall Street Journal, February 10, 2024

In August, Ali Bongo, then-president of the Central African nation of Gabon, made a startling revelation to a top White House aide: During a meeting at his presidential palace, Bongo admitted he had secretly promised Chinese leader Xi Jinping that Beijing could station military forces on Gabon's Atlantic Ocean coast. Alarmed, U.S. principal deputy national security adviser Jon Finer urged Bongo to retract the offer, according to an American national security official. The U.S. considers the Atlantic its strategic front yard and sees a permanent Chinese military presence there—particularly a naval base, where Beijing could rearm and repair warships—as a serious threat to American security.

<https://www.wsj.com/world/africa/u-s-china-tensions-have-a-new-front-a-naval-base-in-africa-616e9e77>

China to join Cobra Gold 2024 military exercise in Thailand

China Military Online, February 10, 2024

A contingent selected from the Southern Theater Command of the People's Liberation Army will participate the Cobra Gold 2024 multinational exercise from Feb. 10 to March 7 in Thailand, according to a news release from China's Ministry of National Defence. It is the 11th consecutive time that the PLA has been invited to participate in the exercise since 2014. The Chinese army plans to join engineering assistance, tabletop exercise of humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, and live drills under the scenarios of building collapsing, hazardous substances leakage, first aid, and fire rescue.

http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/CHINA_209163/TopStories_209189/16286380.html

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