

August 10, 2023

# 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

## **Shenzhou-15 crew make first appearance after returning to Earth in June**

Global Times, August 1, 2023

The three taikonauts from China's Shenzhou-15 crewed mission, known as the "dream crew," made their first appearance in public 57 days later after returning to Earth in June. The crew members shared their experience and feeling in the space and deeply felt the wonder of nature, the vastness of the universe. China launched the manned spaceship Shenzhou-15 on November 29, 2022, sending Fei Junlong, Deng Qingming and Zhang Lu to China's space station core module Tianhe.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202308/1295433.shtml>

## **Pentagon seeks 'Escalation Management' with China, top policy official says**

Chris Gordon

Air and Space Forces Magazine, August 1, 2023

Though a parade of senior American officials have visited China as of late to try to encourage a working relationship with Beijing, the Pentagon has yet to make significant progress in establishing substantive communications between the American and Chinese militaries—a tool for avoiding miscommunication and escalation during a potential crisis. “Escalation management in the Indo-Pacific is so incredibly important, and we would be delighted to have increasing communication channels and connectivity with the [People’s Republic of China],” Mara Karlin, a senior policy official at the Pentagon, told reporters August 1 at a Defense Writers Group event.

<https://www.airandspaceforces.com/pentagon-escalation-management-china/>

## **China’s latest drone export curbs ‘may be signal to West it is neutral in Russia-Ukraine war**

Minnie Chan and Orange Wang

South China Morning Post, August 1, 2023

China’s latest export restrictions on drones could be seen as a compromise in response to increasing Western pressure over its close ties with Russia, defence analysts have suggested. Starting from next month,

exporters will require government approval to export civilian drones that could also have military applications. The new curbs, will inevitably cause serious losses to Chinese firms as both Russia and Ukraine have been turning to foreign suppliers to equip their armed forces in a conflict where drones have played an increasingly important role.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3229654/chinas-latest-drone-export-curbs-may-be-signal-west-it-neutral-russia-ukraine-war>

## **Joe Biden to ask Congress to fund Taiwan arms via Ukraine budget**

Demetri Sevastopulo and Felicia Schwartz

Financial Times, August 2, 2023

The White House will ask Congress to fund arms for Taiwan as part of a supplemental budget request for Ukraine, in an effort to speed up the supply of weapons to the country amid the rising threat from China. Critics of the current Taiwan strategy have urged Washington to supply weapons more quickly as China increases military activity around the country. The Chinese embassy in Washington said China “firmly opposed US military ties with, and arms provision, to Taiwan”, over which Beijing claims sovereignty. It called on Washington to “stop posing risks to peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait.”

<https://www.ft.com/content/9807f021-a7db-4357-8ea2-ed05cbf4ba05>

## **China's great race to build a SpaceX competitor**

Zhao Dan, Qian Tong and Hao Shuai

Nikkei Asia, August 2, 2023

On July 12, the Zhuque-2 (ZQ-2) rocket lifted off from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in Northwest China's Gansu province, successfully entering its designated orbit. LandSpace Technology became the world's first private company to launch a methane-liquid oxygen carrier rocket, marking a major breakthrough for China's new low-cost liquid-propellant rockets. The launch, the second try after a failure seven months ago, is crucial for the eight-year-old startup. The market is eagerly seeking a Chinese answer to Elon Musk's SpaceX.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Caixin/China-s-great-race-to-build-a-SpaceX-competitor>

## **China replaces elite nuclear leadership in surprise military shake-up**

Brad Lendon, Simone McCarthy and Wayne Chang

CNN, August 2, 2023

China has revealed two new leaders of its People's Liberation Army Rocket Force this week in a surprise shake-up that has raised questions about the inner workings at the top of the military branch overseeing the nation's powerful arsenal of nuclear and ballistic missiles. The state media named Wang Houbin as commander of the Rocket Force and Xu Xisheng as the political commissar of the force in a report highlighting their promotion to the rank of general by Chinese leader Xi Jinping.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2023/08/02/china/china-pla-rocket-force-shakeup-new-leaders-intl-hnk-ml-mic/index.html>

## **Analysts say shakeup at China's rocket force suggests strategy shift toward 'Nuclear Triad'**

Joyce Huang

Voice of America, August 2, 2023

The reshuffle at the PLA Rocket Force suggests a marked shift in Xi's nuclear strategy toward the so-called "nuclear triad" — a three-pronged force that enables nuclear missiles to be launched from the air, sea and land — under an integrated command system, analysts warn. That will help strengthen China's nuclear deterrent capabilities and thus pose a greater threat to U.S. security, they say.

<https://www.voanews.com/a/analysts-say-shakeup-at-china-s-rocket-force-suggests-strategy-shift-toward-nuclear-triad-/7208792.html>

## **AUKUS nuke submarine deal a threat to global security, intl NPT regime: report**

Wang Qi

Global Times, August 3, 2023

The AUKUS nuclear submarine deal, which is rooted in "great power competition," poses a serious risk to regional and global security and the international non-proliferation regime, says a joint report by a Chinese

and a Russian think tank at a seminar held in Vienna. The report, titled "The AUKUS submarine deal: risks for the nuclear non-proliferation regime and global security", was jointly released by the China Arms Control and Disarmament Association and Russia's Center for Energy and Security Studies.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202308/1295648.shtml>

## **Eyeing China in the Pacific, US studies explosives to make missiles fly farther**

Mike Stone

Reuters, August 3, 2023

U.S. officials want to tinker with the mix of chemicals fueling missiles and rockets to gain an advantage in the Pacific by increasing the range of its frontline munitions so U.S. forces can operate farther away from China. The Pentagon and Congress are looking at a retrofit that could extend ranges for some current weapons as much as 20% by using more powerful propellants and lighter warheads, two congressional aides and two U.S. officials said who spoke to Reuters under the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/eyeing-china-pacific-us-studies-explosives-make-missiles-fly-further-2023-08-02/>

## **US Navy sailors arrested for sharing information with China**

Joe Miller

Financial Times, August 3, 2023

Two US Navy sailors have been arrested for passing on sensitive military information to the Chinese government, prosecutors in California said, alleging the men were paid thousands of dollars to reveal details of defence equipment and secret operations. Jinchao Wei, who worked as a machinist's mate at a naval base in San Diego, has been charged with espionage for allegedly sending photos and videos of an amphibious assault ship to a Chinese intelligence officer, as well as technical and mechanical manuals.

<https://www.ft.com/content/97a2d940-4fd6-40ba-aa2f-b0e768394eb3#post-a02ca0b5-5f30-4cd8-a23d-8291fe2b2046>

## **China's rivals warn of nuclear build-up, but analysts say Beijing seeks quality over quantity**

Minnie Chan

South China Morning Post, August 4, 2023

China's military is focusing its nuclear programme on quality rather than quantity when it comes to warheads, Chinese defence analysts have said, dismissing suggestions that the PLA is embarking on a massive build-up. The assessments follow the release last week of a Japanese defence ministry white paper that said Beijing could quadruple its arsenal to 1,500 warheads by 2035, echoing estimates by the Pentagon in October. Tokyo estimated the People's Liberation Army had 350 nuclear warheads as of last year, while an earlier report by the Federation of American Scientists' Nuclear Information Project estimated Beijing had roughly 410 nuclear warheads and more in production.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3230023/chinas-rivals-warn-nuclear-build-analysts-say-beijing-seeks-quality-over-quantity>

## **China launches new meteorological satellite to provide more accurate forecasts amid climate change**

Zhao Lei

China Daily, August 4, 2023

China launched a meteorological satellite for weather forecasting, climate change monitoring and research on atmospheric chemistry. A Long March 4C carrier rocket lifted off at 11:47 am at the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwestern China and flew about 22 minutes before placing the Fengyun 3F into a sun-synchronous orbit, according to the China National Space Administration. The administration said in a news release that the satellite is equipped with 10 pieces of advanced equipment including a hyperspectral infrared atmospheric sounder, a microwave temperature sounder and a device to measure Earth radiation.

<https://global.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202308/04/WS64cc48faa31035260b81a409.html>

## **US and China to open communication lines after diplomatic push bears fruit**

Demetri Sevastopulo

Financial Times, August 4, 2023

The US and China are opening new lines of communication to tackle contentious issues, in one of the first signs of progress towards stabilising relations since secretary of state Antony Blinken visited Beijing in

June. According to three people familiar with the situation, Washington and Beijing will create two working groups to focus on Asia-Pacific regional issues and maritime issues, and a possible third group to focus on broader areas. The move comes amid tension between the powers over issues from China's assertive activity around Taiwan and refusal to condemn Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, to Beijing's concern about US alliances in the Indo-Pacific and tough export controls.

<https://www.ft.com/content/524fdff1-a3f1-406f-9bcf-f3af606df52e>

## **Will China embrace nuclear brinkmanship as it reaches nuclear parity?**

Michael Tkacik

The Diplomat, August 5, 2023

A war between the United States and China would have catastrophic global consequences. Thus, deterring Chinese revisionism must be the sine qua non of U.S. policy in the Indo-Pacific. While war has been avoided to date, China's behavior is increasingly assertive as it seeks to become the dominant global power. China has shown itself adept at utilizing political coercion to achieve its goals. It uses a wide variety of statecraft tools and tactics to achieve its goals, from hybrid warfare to "comprehensive national power" (CNP) to the People's Liberation Army (PLA)'s "Three Warfares" framework to "gray zone tactics."

<https://thediplomat.com/2023/08/will-china-embrace-nuclear-brinkmanship-as-it-reaches-nuclear-parity/>

## **China's Belt and Road Initiative regains momentum as focus shifts to smaller 'high-quality' projects**

Kawala Xie

South China Morning Post, August 5, 2023

China's belt and road projects rebounded in the first half of 2023 with a strong focus on metal investments in sub-Saharan Africa, according to a new report. The initiative, which marks its 10th anniversary this year, appears to have regained momentum after the Covid-19 pandemic slowed down activity for three years. A total of 103 deals worth US\$43.3 billion were signed in the first six months of this year compared with US\$35 billion in the same period in 2022, according to a report by Fudan University's Green Finance and Development Centre.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3230094/chinas-belt-and-road-initiative-regains-momentum-focus-shifts-smaller-high-quality-projects>

## **New Zealand warns of 'assertive' China in 1st national security strategy**

Rurika Imahashi

Nikkei Asia, August 5, 2023

China seeks to spread its influence across the Pacific, New Zealand says in its inaugural national security strategy published Friday, warning that Beijing could upset the strategic balance in the region. "China has become more assertive and more willing to challenge existing international rules and norms," the strategy says. Issued by Prime Minister Chris Hipkins' government, the document comes as the U.S. and China jockey for influence in the Indo-Pacific region.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/Indo-Pacific/New-Zealand-warns-of-assertive-China-in-1st-national-security-strategy>

## **What does China's nuclear force shakeup mean for Taiwan?**

Ian Williams

The Time, August 6, 2023

Senior commanders have vanished or been found dead. Rumours of corruption and even the possible sale of military secrets swirl. President Xi Jinping has installed new generals at the top while issuing ever more strident demands for absolute loyalty amid a surge in war-like rhetoric. Such is the turmoil this weekend at China's Rocket Force, the elite unit in charge of the country's rapidly expanding arsenal of nuclear missiles.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/china-taiwan-nuclear-weapons-force-pghq56jmq>

## **South Korean politician urges US to abandon China chip strategy**

Christian Davies and Song Jung-a

Financial Times, August 6, 2023

Yang Hyang-ja, a former chip engineer and Samsung executive who chaired a ruling party committee on South Korea's semiconductor competitiveness until early this year, said that measures to curb China's ability to access or produce advanced chips risked damaging relations with its Asian allies. The US has passed legislation offering tens of billions of dollars in subsidies to non-Chinese chipmakers to increase semiconductor production in the US, in exchange for restrictions on their ability to upgrade or expand their facilities in China.

<https://www.ft.com/content/26770ab3-f71c-4f39-8569-273a12ffb7b0>



## **Philippine military condemns China's use of water cannon in disputed sea**

Nikkei Asia, August 6, 2023

The Philippine military condemned a Chinese coast guard ship's "excessive and offensive" use of a water cannon to block a Filipino supply boat from delivering new troops, food, water and fuel to a Philippine-occupied shoal in the disputed South China Sea. The tense confrontation on Saturday at the Second Thomas Shoal was the latest flare-up in the long-seething territorial conflicts involving China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei. The disputes in the South China Sea, one of the world's busiest sea lanes, have long been regarded as an Asian flashpoint and a delicate fault line in the rivalry between the United States and China in the region.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/South-China-Sea/Philippine-military-condemns-China-s-use-of-water-cannon-in-disputed-sea>

## **China's hypersonic tungsten rod experiment challenges the US 'rods from God' space weapon concept**

Stephen Chen

South China Morning Post, August 7, 2023

A hypersonic space weapon concept, nicknamed "rods from God", which was first dreamed up during the Cold War, might not be as effective as previously thought, according to a new study. The idea for the hypersonic tungsten rod weapon involves dropping a large tungsten rod from a satellite or other spacecraft in orbit. When the rod hits the target at a speed of Mach 10, a tremendous amount of kinetic energy, similar to that of a nuclear weapon, would be released.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/science/article/3229990/chinas-hypersonic-tungsten-rod-experiment-challenges-us-rods-god-space-weapon-concept>

## **China is not an existential threat to the US: Joseph Nye**

Global Times, August 7, 2023

After a period of icy relations between China and the US, world-renowned US political scientist who coined the term "soft power," former dean of the Harvard Kennedy School of Government and former US assistant

secretary of defense, Joseph S. Nye Jr. (Nye), said signs of efforts to resurrect China-US cooperation are emerging. The real existential danger is if the US and China "blunder into war." However, that would be "very unlikely," Nye said, adding that the pendulum of the bilateral ties "will swing back."

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202308/1295816.shtml>

## **Xi rebuilt the military to his liking. Now a shake-up threatens its image**

Chris Buckley

The New York Times, August 7, 2023

As Xi Jinping has entrenched his hold on power in China, he has likened himself to a physician, eradicating the toxins of corruption and disloyalty that threaten the rule of the Communist Party. And his signature project for over a decade has been bringing to heel the once extravagantly corrupt military leadership. But recent upheavals at high levels of the People's Liberation Army forces suggest that Mr. Xi's cure has not endured.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/07/world/asia/china-nuclear-military-xi.html>

## **Hong Kong's first-ever and one of the world's largest satellite manufacturing facilities to deliver first satellite by 2024; city to keep up with country's robust advancement in space**

Deng Xiaoci

Global Times, August 7, 2023

China's Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) has newly launched the city's first and one of the world's largest satellite manufacturing facilities, known as AMC. The facility revealed to the Global Times in an exclusive interview that their first made-in-Hong Kong, high-quality satellite would hopefully be delivered by the beginning of 2024. Referred also as the ASPACE Hong Kong Satellite Manufacturing Center under the HK Aerospace Technology Group, the AMC, was launched on July 25, marking an important milestone in the development of the city's aerospace technology industry.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202308/1295852.shtml>

## **A sports star. An actor. Now a top diplomat: Why do China's public figures keep disappearing?**

Kim Hjelmgaard

USA Today, August 7, 2023

Recently, the disappearance that has bewildered China watchers and led to unbridled social media speculation inside and outside the country is that of its top foreign affairs diplomat, Qin Gang, who went missing over a month ago. He vanished just as Washington and Beijing made a renewed push to stabilize strained relations. "Authoritarian governments treat information as a threat. That's why they need to control it. It was this way in the Soviet Union. It's this way today in China, in North Korea, in Iran, in Belarus", said Pavel Slunkin, a former diplomat from Belarus, a country where prominent opposition figures of President Alexander Lukashenko were kidnapped and murdered in the 1990s.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2023/08/07/qin-gang-the-mysterious-case-of-chinas-disappearing-foreign-minister/70518886007/>

## **In Taiwan, Aso says Japan must show 'will to fight' to deter China**

Ken Moriyasu

Nikkei Asia, August 8, 2023

Japan and its allies and partners need to convey the "will to fight" to deter China from seeking to change the status quo in the Taiwan Strait, former Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso said in Taipei. Since the visit of then-U.S. Speaker Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan last August, China has stepped up its aggressive actions toward the island, expanding military drills and crossing over the median line with daily flyovers. President Xi Jinping has said China will strive for peaceful unification but has also noted Beijing "will never promise to renounce the use of force." Being a close neighbor to Taiwan, Aso said, "We should be the very first one to express our attitude and also to make that message clear to the international community, including China."

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/Taiwan-tensions/In-Taiwan-Aso-says-Japan-must-show-will-to-fight-to-deter-China>

## **Chinese authorities seize banned Japanese nuclear-contaminated food in Zhejiang**

Global Times, August 8, 2023

Chinese authorities have recently seized a batch of banned nuclear-contaminated food from Japan in Jiashan county, Jiaxing city, East China's Zhejiang Province, as they carry out strict scrutiny of food imports to protect the safety of Chinese consumers. The batch of food includes candy, chocolates and beverages, Beijing Business Today, reported. Jiashan officials found that a local store selling imported foods called "Shopping Jiaxing" was selling food from nuclear radiation-affected areas in Japan. They then told the local market supervision bureau to take action.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202308/1295921.shtml>

## **Tritium in Chinese nuclear wastewater above Fukushima levels**

The Japan Times, August 8, 2023

The amount of radioactive tritium in wastewater from Chinese nuclear plants, recorded at 13 of the nation's monitoring points in 2021, surpassed the maximum allowable annual amount of the material contained in treated water set to be released from the Fukushima No. 1 plant, according to public data. Beijing has been opposed to Tokyo's plan to begin releasing treated radioactive water from the crippled Fukushima plant into the sea and has tightened controls on seafood imports from Japan.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/sports/2023/08/08/soccer/china-nuclear-wastewater-tritium/>

## **China hacked Japan's sensitive defence networks, officials say**

Ellen Nakashima

The Washington Post, August 8, 2023

In the fall of 2020, the National Security Agency made an alarming discovery: Chinese military hackers had compromised classified defense networks of the United States' most important strategic ally in East Asia. Cyberspies from the People's Liberation Army had wormed their way into Japan's most sensitive computer systems. The hackers had deep, persistent access and appeared to be after anything they could get their hands on — plans, capabilities, assessments of military shortcomings, according to three former senior

U.S. officials, who were among a dozen current and former U.S. and Japanese officials interviewed, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the matter's sensitivity.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2023/08/07/china-japan-hack-pentagon/>

## **Biden orders ban on new investments in China's sensitive high-tech industries**

Peter Baker and David E. Sanger

The New York Times, August 9, 2023

President Biden escalated his confrontation with China by signing an executive order banning new American investment in key technology industries that could be used to enhance Beijing's military capabilities, the latest in a series of moves putting more distance between the world's two largest economies. The order will prohibit venture capital and private equity firms from pumping more money into Chinese efforts to develop semiconductors and other microelectronics, quantum computers and certain artificial intelligence applications. Administration officials stressed that the move was tailored to guard national security, but China is likely to see it as part of a wider campaign to contain its rise.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/09/us/politics/biden-ban-china-investment.html>

## **Beijing's top diplomat Wang Yi to visit Asean members amid South China Sea tensions**

Kawala Xie

South China Morning Post, August 9, 2023

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi will visit Singapore, Malaysia and Cambodia this week amid simmering tensions between Beijing and Manila in the South China Sea. Wang begins the four-day Southeast Asia trip on August 10, the foreign ministry said. It will be his first official trip as foreign minister since he was reappointed to the job on July 25. It comes after a Chinese coastguard vessel fired water cannon at a Philippine supply ship in Second Thomas Shoal in the South China Sea over the weekend. The disputed reef is claimed by both Beijing and Manila.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3230554/beijings-top-diplomat-visit-asean-members-amid-south-china-sea-tensions>

## **Chinese UN mission releases working paper on Fukushima nuclear-contaminated wastewater issue, urging Japan to discharge in responsible manner**

Global Times, August 9, 2023

China's Permanent Mission to the United Nations (UN) and Other International Organizations in Vienna has submitted the working paper on the disposal of nuclear-contaminated water of Japan's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station to the First Preparatory Committee for the Eleventh Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The disposal of nuclear-contaminated water from Fukushima concerns the global marine environment and public health.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202308/1295954.shtml>

## **China installs core module of world's first commercial small nuclear reactor**

CGTN, August 10, 2023

The core module of China's Linglong One, the world's first commercial small modular reactor (SMR), was successfully installed in south China's Hainan Province, marking a milestone node of the SMR's installation. The core module, dubbed as the heart of Linglong One, consists of pressure vessel, steam generator, primary pump receiver and other critical equipment. Its steam generator had been welded in the reactor pressure vessel before lifting, which is similar to integrating the "lung" and "heart" of the nuclear power plant.

<https://news.cgtn.com/news/2023-08-10/China-installs-core-module-of-world-s-first-commercial-small-nuclear-reactor-1m9nIsfr77q/index.html>

## **How China aims to counter US 'containment' efforts in tech**

The Washington Post, August 10, 2023

The US is engaged in what it terms "strategic competition" with China, a full-throttled campaign to prevent the world's No. 2 economy from gaining an edge in state-of-the-art technology that could threaten both jobs and national security. On one track, President Joe Biden is using massive subsidies to support domestic industries seen as drivers of growth and innovation. Meanwhile, his administration is working to hobble China's efforts with trade restrictions, blacklists and investment curbs.

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/energy/2023/08/10/explainer-how-china-aims-to-counter-us-containment-efforts-in-tech/159aca58-3756-11ee-ac4e-e707870e43db\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/energy/2023/08/10/explainer-how-china-aims-to-counter-us-containment-efforts-in-tech/159aca58-3756-11ee-ac4e-e707870e43db_story.html)

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