

November 30, 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

Fifth force: is China adding hypersonic ‘near-space command’ to its military for ‘precise and merciless’ attacks?

Stephen Chen

South China Morning Post, November 20, 2023

In what is believed to be a world first, China has established a near-space command equipped with a professional hypersonic weapons force that reports directly to the highest level of the military, according to a recently published paper. The new force joins the People’s Liberation Army’s army, air force, navy and rocket branches. “The near-space combat force is in the process of rapid development. The establishment of relevant units is not yet mature, and combat operations have not been standardised. The understanding of near-space combat command needs to be deepened,” said the researchers from the National University of Defence Technology.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/science/article/3241059/fifth-force-china-adding-hypersonic-near-space-command-its-military-precise-and-merciless-attacks>

Hegemonic mentality behind US media hype of ‘China threat’ theory: experts

Liu Xuanzun

Global Times, November 21, 2023

US media claimed that the era of total US submarine dominance over China is ending, a move Chinese experts said is yet another hype of the "China threat" theory motivated by the US hegemonic mentality. China is narrowing one of the largest gaps dividing the US and Chinese militaries as it makes advances in its submarine technology and undersea detection capabilities, The Wall Street Journal (WSJ) reported. The WSJ report claimed that China launched early this year a nuclear-powered attack submarine with a pump-jet propulsion system instead of a propeller, marking the first time this noise-reducing technology used on the latest US submarines had been seen on a Chinese submarine.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202311/1302234.shtml>

A growing global footprint for China’s space program worries Pentagon

Cate Cadell and Marcelo Perez del Carpio

The Washington Post, November 21, 2023

The Pentagon is increasingly concerned that China’s growing network of facilities in Latin America and Antarctica for its civilian space and satellite programs has defense capabilities. U.S.

officials say the ground stations — which allow countries to maintain uninterrupted communication with satellites and other space vehicles — have the potential to expand Beijing’s global military surveillance network in the southern hemisphere and areas close to the United States. China already has over 700 satellites in orbit, with plans to expand that number exponentially in the coming years — a project that requires a global constellation of terrestrial facilities to track and communicate with them as they pass over different parts of the planet.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/interactive/2023/china-space-program-south-america-defense/>

With US, allies calming things down, EU should rethink its China approach

James Smith

Global Times, November 21, 2023

There has been a shift in the West's relations with China at large, driven in part by the US. In the space of a couple of weeks, US President Joe Biden has met with Chinese President Xi Jinping in San Francisco, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese travelled to Beijing, while the UK appointed David Cameron, a dovish figure, as its foreign secretary. In line with this, the media has sought to alleviate tensions with China. This shift is not a comprehensive reset of China's relationship with the West, as the US still intends to "compete" with Beijing, but rather on a more stable footing.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202311/1302254.shtml>

US and Philippines launch joint air and sea patrols to counter China

Kathrin Hille

Financial Times, November 21, 2023

The US and the Philippines have started joint air and sea patrols in the South China Sea, the latest step in the two allies’ efforts to strengthen military co-operation amid growing tension with Beijing in the disputed waters. “This significant initiative is a testament to our commitment to bolster the interoperability of our military forces,” Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr wrote in a post on social media site X on Tuesday announcing the joint patrol, the first conducted with the US in seven years. The move comes as Manila and Beijing are embroiled in an increasingly heated stand-off over the Philippine military’s regular resupply missions to its outpost on Second Thomas Shoal, a sandbank in the South China Sea that is also claimed by China.

<https://www.ft.com/content/909fc022-736c-4d31-8aa6-9becf2d2cff2>

U.S. and China should continue multilayered talks to avoid conflict

Nikkei Asia, November 22, 2023

The recent summit in the U.S. between President Joe Biden and his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping, was their first meeting in a year. The shared understanding they expressed on the need to avoid conflict is laudable, but the details on how to achieve this were minimal and vague. The two countries should continue to increase dialogue at all levels while reining in confrontation in the areas of security and economics. In their meeting, Biden stressed that it is "paramount" that there be "no misconceptions or miscommunication.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Opinion/The-Nikkei-View/U.S.-and-China-should-continue-multilayered-talks-to-avoid-conflict>

The role of nuclear weapons in a Taiwan crisis

Gregory Weaver

Atlantic Council, November 22, 2023

The potential for a conflict over Taiwan is increasing due to China's nuclear and conventional military buildup and the threat of two simultaneous conflicts with China and Russia, which would severely stress the ability of US and allied conventional forces to win in both theaters. Nuclear weapons will cast a long shadow over a Taiwan conflict and could play multiple roles in the deterrence and warfighting strategies and operations of both the United States and the People's Republic of China (PRC). A conflict over Taiwan has a number of attributes that will shape those roles. Those attributes make the potential for limited nuclear escalation real and uncontrolled nuclear escalation possible.

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/issue-brief/the-role-of-nuclear-weapons-in-a-taiwan-crisis/>

China delays payments to IAEA amid Fukushima water release

Takayuki Tanaka

Nikkei Asia, November 23, 2023

China has been delaying its contributions to the International Atomic Energy Agency this year, having withheld all payments as of September and delivering only half as of early November. Some Western diplomatic sources in Vienna, home to the IAEA, see the move as an attempt by China to apply pressure to oppose Japan's release of treated wastewater from the Fukushima

Daiichi nuclear plant, which the IAEA approved in July. The IAEA, a United Nations organization responsible for preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and promoting peaceful uses of nuclear energy, is funded by euro and U.S. dollar contributions from member countries.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/China-delays-payments-to-IAEA-amid-Fukushima-water-release2>

Chinese envoy calls for nuclear-weapon-free zone in Middle East

China Military Online, November 23, 2023

A Chinese envoy called for more efforts to support the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). "The Middle East should not be threatened by nuclear weapons. This is the common call from countries in the region," Li Song, China's permanent representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), told a meeting of the agency's board of governors. Li said China has been actively supporting the region's efforts to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other WMDs.

<http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/SIDEBAR/MostViewed/16268666.html>

French FM begins China visit to enhance strategic mutual trust

Chen Qingqing

Global Times, November 23, 2023

French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Catherine Colonna began her two-day visit to China. She is scheduled to co-host the 6th meeting of the China-France high-level dialogue mechanism on people-to-people exchanges, paving the way for more activities in 2024 to mark the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and France. Some media outlets said Colonna's visit aims to smooth relations after a European anti-subsidy probe championed by Paris into Chinese electric vehicles raised trade tensions between the two sides.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202311/1302405.shtml>

Germany needs to prove its new China strategy is more than talk

Axel Berkofsky

Nikkei Asia, November 23, 2023

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz is under pressure from friend and foe alike over his government's policies toward China. During a video call three weeks ago, Chinese President Xi Jinping asked

Scholz to keep Germany open to Chinese investors and to allow German companies to go easy with the European Union's push for "de-risking" supply chains. A week later, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg urged the Scholz administration to stop dragging its feet on blocking Chinese companies Huawei Technologies and ZTE from supplying and installing components for Germany's 5G telecommunications networks, warning of dependence on digital infrastructure technologies that might be controlled by an authoritarian regime.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Opinion/Germany-needs-to-prove-its-new-China-strategy-is-more-than-talk>

China's position against Fukushima nuclear wastewater discharge clear, unchanged: FM spokesperson

Xinhua, November 23, 2023

China's position against Japan's discharge of Fukushima nuclear-contaminated water into the ocean is clear and unchanged, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson said. Mao said that China is opposed to Japan's discharge of Fukushima nuclear-contaminated water into the ocean. "This is our clear position and has not changed," Mao said, pointing out that the ocean discharge bears on the health of all humanity, the global marine environment and the international public interest. "Japan needs to take seriously the legitimate concerns both from home and abroad and properly handle this in a responsible and constructive manner," said Mao.

<https://english.news.cn/20231123/692193a4a9414b5d9d07b5288ba43382/c.html>

S. Korea urged to respect China's core interests before top diplomats' meeting in Busan

Global Times, November 24, 2023

The top diplomats from China, Japan and South Korea are reportedly gathering this weekend in Busan, South Korea. Analysts noted that while high-level exchanges among the three neighbors are crucial to maintaining regional stability, the South Korean government needs to act prudently and stop pointing fingers at China's internal affairs to foster amicable momentum for the long-delayed meeting of the three nations. China urges the relevant parties to stop making irresponsible comments on issues that have a bearing on China's core and major concerns and to be very prudent about what they say or do, said Mao.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202311/1302465.shtml>

Can China achieve its nuclear energy ambitions?

Chermaine Lee

Voice of America, November 24, 2023

Organizers of the coming COP28 climate conference, believing nuclear energy must play a role in weaning the world off fossil fuels, are likely to be comfortable with Chinese plans to make nuclear power a major part of its energy future. While high-profile accidents at Three Mile Island, Chernobyl and Fukushima have tarnished the image of nuclear power in much of the world, China — the world's biggest carbon emitter — is pressing ahead with ambitious plans for new nuclear construction. Beijing has approved at least 21 new power units since 2021, and each year, six to eight new nuclear units are expected to be greenlit, according to a September report in Xinhua, the state-controlled news agency.

<https://www.voanews.com/a/can-china-achieve-its-nuclear-energy-ambitions-/7368281.html>

Chinese envoy calls for intergovernmental talks to address AUKUS-related risks

Xinhua, November 25, 2023

A Chinese envoy called for intergovernmental discussions at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to address the proliferation risks posed by the AUKUS nuclear submarine deal. Li Song, China's permanent representative to the IAEA, told a meeting of the IAEA board of governors that the AUKUS collaboration has a serious impact on the security of the world and the Asia-Pacific region, and poses grave challenges to the international non-proliferation regime and the IAEA safeguards system. "Such cooperation runs counter to the purpose and objectives of the NPT (the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons) and is a typical act of double standard," Li said. Under the trilateral AUKUS alliance, which was announced in September 2021, Australia will be able to build nuclear-powered submarines with technology provided by the United States and the United Kingdom.

<https://english.news.cn/20231125/73350ede61154e588d4a84937bffbcbff/c.html>

Chinese military holds drills near Myanmar after convoy fire

Nikkei Asia, November 25, 2023

China's military will begin "combat training activities" on its side of the border with Myanmar, it said on social media, a day after a convoy of trucks carrying goods into the neighboring Southeast

Asian nation went up in flames. The incident, which Myanmar state media called an insurgent attack, came amid insecurity concerns in China, whose envoy met top officials in Myanmar's capital for talks on border stability after recent signs of rare strain in their ties.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Myanmar-Crisis/Chinese-military-holds-drills-near-Myanmar-after-convoy-fire>

Wang Yi Attends the Tenth China-Japan-ROK Trilateral Foreign Ministers' Meeting

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the People's Republic of China, November 26, 2023

On November 26, 2023, Member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and Foreign Minister Wang Yi attended the Tenth China-Japan-ROK Trilateral Foreign Ministers' Meeting with ROK Foreign Minister Park Jin and Japanese Foreign Minister Kamikawa Yoko in Busan, the Republic of Korea (ROK). Wang Yi said, China-Japan-ROK cooperation has become the multilateral cooperation framework with the highest degree of institutionalization, the widest coverage and the richest connotation in East Asia, which has effectively served the development of the three countries and benefited the people in the region. The development history of China-Japan-ROK cooperation shows that the trilateral cooperation has a solid foundation, strong demand, huge potential and broad prospects.

https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjdt_665385/wshd_665389/202311/t20231130_11190157.html

China's new stealth aircraft can find and kill the B-21 'Raider' with hypersonic missiles, computer simulation suggests

Stephen Chen

South China Morning Post, November 27, 2023

As the race heats up between China and the US to develop the next-generation stealth aircraft armed with the latest weapons, a Chinese research team has staged a virtual duel between the two rivals to see what it would take to win a future air battle. The results suggested that, with a combination of advanced hardware and new tactics, China could detect the opponents first. In one war game, a B-21-like stealth platform and its companion drone were both shot down by China's air-to-air missiles, which can reach a top speed of Mach 6.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/science/article/3242527/chinas-new-stealth-aircraft-can-find-and-kill-b-21-raider-hypersonic-missiles-computer-simulation>

China breaks ground in nuclear energy heating

Zheng Xin

China Daily, November 27, 2023

China's first nuclear energy heating project that covers multiple prefecture-level cities, operated by the State Power Investment Corp, was put into operation in East China's Shandong province. The project, which is also the third phase of "Warm Nuclear No 1", a commercial nuclear energy heating project in China, provides green heating to Shandong province's Haiyang and Rushan with a 23-kilometer main transport pipe.

<https://global.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202311/27/WS65640932a31090682a5f0384.html>

US potential intermediate-range missiles deployment 'big provocation' to China

Zhang Han

Global Times, November 27, 2023

The US military is reportedly planning to deploy new land-based intermediate-range missiles in the Asia-Pacific region to "defend" the island of Taiwan, a move that "has limited tactical impact" at present but fully demonstrates the US' determination to interfere in the Taiwan question, observers said. The US is to send medium-range missiles including the Standard Missile 6 (SM-6) and Tomahawk to the Asia-Pacific, US military news website Defense One reported, citing remarks by US Army General Charles Flynn made during the annual Halifax International Security Forum. Flynn said the US has tested these missiles and plans to deploy them in 2024. He did not disclose the specific timing or location of the deployment, only saying "we will deploy them."

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202311/1302569.shtml>

China's Fujian aircraft carrier spotted in new position, bringing it a step closer to sea trial, analysts say

Jack Lau

South China Morning Post, November 27, 2023

China's most advanced aircraft carrier, the Fujian, has moved dozens of metres from its usual berthing place in what analysts say could be a sign the warship is moving towards a sea trial. The country's third carrier moved around 27 metres (89 feet) from the quay in the Jiangnan shipyard

in Shanghai on November 19, then returned to its normal position within two days, according to imagery from the Sentinel-2 satellite operated by the European Space Agency. Aircraft carriers are a part of the Chinese navy's goal to operate in the open sea. Military exercises show they would also play a key role in any strategy for an attack on Taiwan, the self-ruled island Beijing claims as its own and has vowed to unite with the Chinese mainland, by force if necessary.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3242991/chinas-fujian-aircraft-carrier-spotted-new-position-bringing-it-step-closer-sea-trial-analysts-say>

Japan should address relevant stakeholders' legitimate demands for damage assessment and compensation for toxic water dumping: Chinese FM

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the People's Republic of China, November 28, 2023

The ocean discharge of Japan's Fukushima nuclear-contaminated water bears on the health of all humanity, the global marine environment and the international public interest. Japan needs to take seriously domestic and international concerns in the same manner, especially strong concerns of neighboring countries, communicate with stakeholders with a responsible and constructive attitude and address seriously the legitimate demand for damage identification and compensation from stakeholders.

https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2511_665403/202311/t2023112811188496.html

Indo-Pacific to see huge missile buildup by 2030s, Carnegie analyst says

Ken Moriyasu

Nikkei Asia, November 28, 2023

The danger, Panda told Nikkei Asia, is the "intersection between advanced conventional missile systems and the risk of nuclear war." The greatest fear is that countries such as China and North Korea may be more likely to resort to nuclear use if these conventional missiles are perceived to target their national leadership, he said. The missile buildup in the region began when the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty expired in 2019 after the U.S. and Russia withdrew, he said. The treaty signed in 1987 between the U.S. and the Soviet Union banned all ground-based missiles with a range of 500 to 5,500 kilometers, but became an obstacle as China, who was not part of the treaty, had a free hand to develop its own arsenal.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/Indo-Pacific/Indo-Pacific-to-see-huge-missile-buildup-by-2030s-Carnegie-analyst-says>

China vows to curb decoupling as U.S. adds supply chain safeguards

CK Tan

Nikkei Asia, November 29, 2023

China this week pledged to build an open and inclusive industrial supply chain, just after the U.S. announced additional measures to ensure its own access to reliable energy and critical technology. Chinese Premier Li Qiang on Tuesday told the inaugural China International Supply Chain Expo in Beijing that the government's approach reflects its "clear-cut stand against protectionism, decoupling and supply chain disruptions." Li added that China will ensure a stable supply of high-quality products for the global market.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/US-China-tensions/China-vows-to-curb-decoupling-as-U.S.-adds-supply-chain-safeguards>

China pays tribute to Kissinger, ‘old friend of the Chinese people’

Pei-Lin Wu and Vic Chiang

The Washington Post, November 29, 2023

Chinese state media mourned the death of Henry Kissinger, the 100-year-old who was at the heart of the United States' rapprochement with China half a century ago and most recently visited China only this summer. The outpouring of praise and nostalgia for Kissinger was a distinct change in tone for China's state-run news outlets, noted in recent years for their antipathy toward American administrations as relations have plumbed their lowest depths since the normalization in relations in the 1970s that Kissinger helped bring out.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/11/29/china-henry-kissinger-united-states/>

First standardized, mass-produced quantum chips sold to overseas market

Chai Hua

China Daily, November 29, 2023

SpinQ Technology has become the first Chinese company to deliver superconducting quantum chips overseas, according to the Shenzhen-based quantum computing startup. In an announcement, the company said the chips had been supplied to a research institution in the Middle East. Computing capability with quantum chips is exponentially greater than current classical

computing, making it a vital research direction in the computing industry. Quantum computing chips are the processors for quantum computers, but their mass production is full of challenges, including ensuring the consistency and stability of quantum bits, as well as technological difficulties in material processing, measurement and control.

<https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202311/29/WS65669635a31090682a5f080c.html>

The next front in the tech war with China: Graphite (and clean energy)

Lily Kuo

The Washington Post, November 29, 2023

A new front has opened in the intensifying U.S.-China tech war: This time, it's over the metals needed to power electric vehicles and make the computer chips and electronics that fuel the U.S. economy. And Beijing has made clear its restrictions on critical minerals are payback for Washington's efforts to curtail Chinese access to advanced American semiconductors. "This is just the beginning," Wei Jianguo, former vice commerce minister, said in July, when China restricted exports of gallium and germanium, which are used in high-performance semiconductors, weapons systems and solar panels.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/11/29/china-critical-minerals-graphite-trade-united-states/>

China's export controls on graphite to take effect; application channels for firms open: officials

Global Times, November 30, 2023

China's move to impose export controls on certain highly sensitive graphite items has put many in the West on notice, with officials and companies in countries such as the US and Japan scrambling to gauge the potential impact. The control measures are set to take effect on December 1. Chinese officials reiterated that these export controls don't target any specific country but are in line with international norms and are intended to protect China's national security and interests. They also noted that channels for export applications are open and applications will be approved if they are in line with the laws and rules, and China will continue its commitment to protecting the stability of global industry chains.

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202311/1302813.shtml>

Chipmaker's CPU 'big step' in domestic tech

Ma Si

China Daily, November 30, 2023

Chinese chipmaker Loongson Technology's latest self-developed central processing unit marks a big stride in China's homegrown chip technology, but greater efforts are needed to build a software ecosystem to promote its use, experts said. The comments came after the company unveiled the Loongson 3A6000 in Beijing on Tuesday, which has performance parity with 14th Gen CPUs unveiled by Intel in clock-to-clock tests, according to the China Electronics Standardization Institute. The Loongson 3A6000 is the latest general-purpose processor with the country's own architecture and design. It can run applications on different platforms for complex tasks.

<https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202311/30/WS6567d498a31090682a5f0aa2.html>

Philippines seeking partners to counter Beijing in South China Sea

Ramon Royandoyan

Nikkei Asia, November 30, 2023

The Philippines is floating the possibility of other countries taking part in joint patrols in the South China Sea, a week after conducting such operations with the U.S. and Australia, the country's top defense official told Nikkei Asia in an interview. Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro said Japan, New Zealand, the U.K., Canada and France are among the candidates to potentially join multilateral patrols in the disputed waters. Teodoro argues that such countries have a shared interest in protecting the strategic waters. "[T]he West Philippine Sea ... is part of the global commons anyway, where all vessels have the right of innocent passage," Teodoro said. Manila refers to parts of the waters it claims in the South China Sea as the West Philippine Sea.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/Defense/Philippines-seeking-partners-to-counter-Beijing-in-South-China-Sea>

China is building nuclear reactors faster than any other country

The Economist, November 30, 2023

To wean their country off imported oil and gas, and in the hope of retiring dirty coal-fired power stations, China's leaders have poured money into wind and solar energy. But they are also turning to one of the most sustainable forms of non-renewable power. Over the past decade China has

added 37 nuclear reactors, for a total of 55, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency, a UN body. During that same period America, which leads the world with 93 reactors, added two.

<https://www.economist.com/china/2023/11/30/china-is-building-nuclear-reactors-faster-than-any-other-country>

China's Sea-Based Nuclear Deterrent: Organizational, Operational, and Strategic Implications

David C. Logan

CMSI China Maritime Reports, U.S. Naval War College, November 30, 2023

China's development of a credible sea-based deterrent has important implications for the PLAN, for China's nuclear strategy, and for U.S.-China strategic stability. For the PLAN, the need to protect the SSBN force may divert resources away from other missions; it may also provide justification for further expansion of the PLAN fleet size. For China's nuclear strategy and operations, the SSBN force may increase operational and bureaucratic pressures for adopting a more forward-leaning nuclear strategy. For U.S.-China strategic stability, the SSBN force will have complex effects, decreasing risks that Chinese decisionmakers confront use-or-lose escalation pressures, making China less susceptible to U.S. nuclear threats and intimidation and therefore perceiving lower costs to conventional aggression, and potentially introducing escalation risks from conventional-nuclear entanglement to the maritime domain.

<https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1032&context=cmsi-maritime-reports>

*Sylloge on China is compiled by Mr. Niranjan C. Oak
with inputs from Mr. Kushal Agrawal*

**Nuclear and Arms Control Centre, MP-IDSA
And
Indian Pugwash Society**