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EDITORS

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Note from Head CS3

Dear All,

We are happy to publish the fourth issue of the *Sinometer: The China Strategic Monitor*, a monthly magazine by the Centre for Strategic Studies and Simulation (CS3), USI.

The importance of China in the global and regional context is ever evolving and this change can be witnessed in geo-political and geo-economic domains. The interest in the fields of Chinese security, economy and political relations has generated several debates making it a focal point of global affairs. The magazine is an attempt to give a peek into some of the important happenings in China and its impact on the world.

The first section of this issue includes a commentary on the ASEAN-China 'Special' Summit which emphasised on the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership for Peace, Security, Prosperity and Sustainable Development. The second section examines several news articles published world over covering China centric issues. The first news brings out the supply of largest and most advanced Warship by China to Pakistan. This is a cause of concern for India as Chinese Navy has been beefing up its presence in the IOR. The second news development covers the visit by a EU delegation to Taiwan and China's angry reaction that follows. The third news development is about President Xi Jinping securing his third term as President and putting himself at par with Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping. The fourth news development deals with the deployment of two supply boats by Philippines in a disputed shoal in the South China Sea.

The fifth news development covers the maiden flight by China's next generation aircraft carrier-based fighter jet. The sixth news development deals with cyberattacks targeting China and other countries in the South Asia subcontinent. The next news development is based on a new Chinese aircraft carrier. The eight news development deals with the recently held China and APEC CEO Meet where President Xi Jinping gave his opinion of the importance of the Asia-Pacific and emphasised on the need for economic diplomacy. The ninth news development covers China's downgrading of diplomatic ties with Lithuania as Lithuania allowed Taiwan to open an Embassy and this hasn't been liked by China to an extent that China has called back their Ambassador as they feel it is a violation of the 'One China Policy'. The last news development in the *Sinometer* is about the virtual meeting held between President Biden and President Xi Jinping where they highlighted their own concerns and also put forward their respective concerns with regard to COVID 19 health challenges, Taiwan Strait and the Indo-Pacific.

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ANALYSIS

ASEAN-China Special Summit: Analysing the Developments

Gitanjali Sinha Roy

On 22 November 2021, the ASEAN-China Special Summit was held to commemorate the 30th Anniversary of ASEAN-China Dialogue Relations which was first established in 1991. This year's Summit was chaired by His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and his Excellency Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China.¹

The Summit aimed to recognise the dynamic relationship shared between ASEAN and China and how this friendship is an excellent example of regional cooperation and focused on mutually beneficial partnerships on peace, stability, development and prosperity of Asia Pacific region.² ASEAN and China reaffirmed their efforts in the domain of strategic partnership for peace and prosperity along with emphasising on the 'ASEAN-China Strategic Partnership Vision 2030'.³ Further, they reiterated the need to look at the principles, shared values and norms which are enshrined in "the Charter of the United Nations, the ASEAN Charter and the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in the region of Southeast Asia (TAC) along with a focus on the five principles of peaceful coexistence, recognise the principles of international law and adhering with the East Asia Summit (EAS) Declaration of the Principles for Mutually Beneficial Relations (Bali Principles)."⁴

A major highlight of this Summit was the mutually supported and closely collaborated efforts made by ASEAN and China for COVID 19 response and accentuate the need to continuously work in solidarity.⁵ Another highlight was the emphasis on the need to follow the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) along with a focus on the need to maintain ASEAN's independent initiative of being open and inclusive.⁶ They also analysed the global economic situation and aimed for a shared resolve to mutually support, assist and cooperate in the daunting task of the economic recovery and also work on a long-term resilient development plan.⁷

Key Domains of Cooperation

The Summit addressed several key issues which covered a wide range of cooperation.

¹http://english.www.gov.cn/news/topnews/202111/22/content_WS619b8df5c6d0df57f98e54c6.html

²<https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Joint-Statement-30th-Anniversary-of-ASEAN-China-Dialogue-Relations-Final.pdf>

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵http://english.www.gov.cn/news/topnews/202111/22/content_WS619b8df5c6d0df57f98e54c6.html

⁶<https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Joint-Statement-30th-Anniversary-of-ASEAN-China-Dialogue-Relations-Final.pdf>

⁷Ibid.



Figure 1: ASEAN-China Special Summit Cooperation. Source: Author's annotated.

Political and Security Cooperation

The Summit highlighted mutual respect for one another's sovereignty and territorial identity. ASEAN and China agreed to value each other's independence and non-interference in internal matters along with adhering to international law. China emphasized that ASEAN countries must adhere to the 'One China policy'.⁸

Both ASEAN and China aimed to maintain frequent bilateral and multilateral dialogues and exchanges with a focus on governance to enhance mutual trust. ASEAN and China have also agreed to coordinate within the domain of "the ASEAN-led frameworks which consist of ASEAN Plus Three (APT), East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus)."⁹ They aimed to strengthen defence exchange and security cooperation through the existing mechanisms and frameworks like ADMM-Plus and the ARF.¹⁰ ASEAN and China also focused on the continued implementation of the 'Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Cooperation' in the field of non-traditional security issues and work to plan and jointly address the non-traditional security threats and challenges like terrorism and transnational crimes.¹¹

ASEAN emphasized that since, the region is free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, they must work with China in order to contribute to global efforts on disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy which would be in accordance with the "ASEAN Charter, the TAC and the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality Declaration (ZOPFAN) and the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ)."¹²

ASEAN and China also focused upon holding the international law which would include the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and work to promote maritime

⁸<https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Joint-Statement-30th-Anniversary-of-ASEAN-China-Dialogue-Relations-Final.pdf>

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

security, peace and stability in the South China Sea.¹³ Further, it was agreed to adhere to commitment of freedom of navigation and overflight in the South China Sea and also exercise self-restraint in matters of the South China Sea. ASEAN and China agreed to aim to withhold the 'Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC)' and promote an environment conducive to negotiations in the domain of 'Code of Conduct (COC) in the South China Sea.'¹⁴

Economic Cooperation

Economically, ASEAN and China have a long commitment and in the Special Summit, they aimed to further reaffirm their commitment to an open, free, inclusive, transparent and non-discriminatory rules-based multilateral trading system with the World Trade Organisation (WTO).¹⁵ They also welcomed the 'Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement' from 1 January 2022 so, as to deliver benefits to businesses and people.¹⁶ The Summit also spoke about "the effective implementation of the ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement (ACFTA) along with creating more trade opportunities in the digital economy sector and further, fostering new sources of growth for cooperation and working towards a more inclusive, modern and comprehensive trade relationship."¹⁷ They also aimed at the setting up of the implementation of the ASEAN-China Joint Statement on 'Synergising the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025'¹⁸ and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).¹⁹ Both ASEAN and China together would help in mutually beneficial relations of cooperation and also garner support from financial institutions like the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank(AIIB).²⁰

Technologically, ASEAN-China aims to explore the 'ASEAN-China Partnership on Digital Economy' which would help cater to develop cooperation in the realms of the "digital economy, smart city, artificial intelligence, e-commerce, big data, 5G uses, digital transformation, cyber and data security and finally, embrace the fourth industrial revolution."²¹ They also suggested the need for closer partnership in science, technology and innovation which would be taken forward with the ASEAN-China Plan of Action on a 'Closer Partnership of Science, Technology and Innovation for Future' (2021-2025).²²

In the realm of the environment, 'ASEAN-China plan to explore cooperation in the domain of the green economy and upgrade new energy technologies, green investments and finances, so as to realise sustainable green growth and low-carbon development.'²³ They also aimed to partner on blue economy and promote marine ecosystem conservation, sustainable use of the ocean and marine resources.²⁴

Socio-Cultural Cooperation

ASEAN and China agreed to cooperate on the public health front along with special emphasis on

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴https://www.iseas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/ISEAS_Perspective_2021_120.pdf

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶http://english.www.gov.cn/news/topnews/202111/22/content_WS619b8df5c6d0df57f98e54c6.html

¹⁷https://www.iseas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/ISEAS_Perspective_2021_120.pdf

¹⁸<https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/47.-December-2017-MPAC2025-2nd-Reprint.pdf>

¹⁹<https://www.cfr.org/backgroundunder/chinas-massive-belt-and-road-initiative>

²⁰https://www.iseas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/ISEAS_Perspective_2021_120.pdf

²¹<https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Joint-Statement-30th-Anniversary-of-ASEAN-China-Dialogue-Relations-Final.pdf>

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

COVID 19 vaccines and help support ASEAN's efforts towards vaccine security and self-reliance.²⁵ They also focused upon the need to implement the 'ASEAN-China Memorandum of Understanding on Health Cooperation' and 'ASEAN-China Public Emergency Preparedness Capacity' (PROMPT) to enhance the institutional capacity building measures to tackle issues.²⁶ They also plan to continue to support the "Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Work Plan IV(2021-2025) and further, aimed to work on strengthening cooperation in the Mekong-Lancang Cooperation(MLC), the NIMP-EAGA-China Cooperation (BECC) and ASEAN related sub-regional frameworks and mechanisms."²⁷

The Summit focused on several dimensions of cooperation like "climate change, biodiversity conservation, environmental protection, low-carbon solutions, clean energy, sustainable cities and rural development along with implementing the Framework of ASEAN-China Environmental Cooperation Strategy and Action Plan (2021-2025) which would help promote green and sustainable recovery and high-quality development in the region."²⁸ The countries aimed to enhance cooperation on disaster management, mitigation and relief through the 'ASEAN-China Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management (AMMDM Plus China)' which would help in improving capacity building and disaster response coordination in the region.²⁹ ASEAN and China also focused on the people-to-people interactions through education, think tanks, youth, local governments and socio-cultural exchanges between the people.³⁰

Regional and International Cooperation

ASEAN-China aimed to work on multilateralism along with maintaining an open and inclusive regional cooperation framework which would also support the centrality of ASEAN in the broader regional architecture and create an international system like the Charter of United Nations and follow the international law and align with principles of inclusivity, transparency, fairness, justice, openness and mutual respect. They also agreed to communicate and cooperate at the global and regional level on issues of climate change, public health, biodiversity conservation, food and energy security.³¹

Conclusion

It needs to be understood that the Summit was titled 'ASEAN-China Special Summit' because firstly, China wanted to emphasise that China's relations with ASEAN is special and it continues to have stronger influence in the region. Secondly, China realizes that some ASEAN countries have raised their voice against Chinese aggressiveness and expansionism in the South China Sea and these activities by China are an attack on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of some of the ASEAN countries and so, China would like to maintain good relations with all countries to keep the South China Sea conflict low. Also, if any of the ASEAN countries like Vietnam reaches out to the QUAD countries especially the United States of America, then automatically, China would not only get into another tussle with America but also, the South China Sea conflict would be blown out of proportion. Third, China realizes that most countries in the world are re-analysing their 'One China Policy' and ASEAN countries too could be on the same path. To make sure that ASEAN countries still follow the 'One China Policy', China has been warming up to these ASEAN countries. Fourth,

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷<https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Joint-Statement-30th-Anniversary-of-ASEAN-China-Dialogue-Relations-Final.pdf>

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹<https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Joint-Statement-30th-Anniversary-of-ASEAN-China-Dialogue-Relations-Final.pdf>

China has very few friends and allies and it feels that ASEAN countries with their centrality can still be manoeuvred into China's 'debt-trap policy' which would give China access to these countries.

Finally, the next chair of ASEAN would be Cambodia and Cambodia is China aligned and if China wants to make changes in the South China Sea it would have to have the consent of the ASEAN countries, so it is trying to win the ASEAN countries. Also, a lot of debate has happened over the Code of Conduct which needs to be signed between ASEAN and China and ASEAN has requested China to peacefully resolve this matter. China has enormous mineral-based explorations in the South China Sea and if the Code of Conduct isn't accepted the way the ASEAN countries want it, then future mineral and energy explorations would be a difficult task for China in the South China Sea.

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NEWS DEVELOPMENTS

China Delivers Largest, Most Advanced Warship to Pakistan

China has delivered to Pakistan the largest and most advanced warship that Beijing has ever exported. Designed and built by China State Shipbuilding Corporation Limited (CSSC), the frigate was delivered to the Pakistan Navy in a commissioning ceremony in Shanghai on 08 November 2021.³² The Type 054A/P frigate was named the PNS Tughril, according to the Global Times.

The PNS Tughril is the first hull of four Type 054 frigates being constructed for the Pakistan Navy, the Pakistan Navy said. The ship is a technologically advanced and highly capable platform with enormous surface-to-surface, surface-to-air and underwater firepower, besides extensive surveillance potentials.³³

It is equipped with state-of-the-art combat management and an electronic warfare system along with modern self-defence capabilities. The Type 054A/P frigate can simultaneously execute a number of naval warfare missions in a highly intense multi-threat environment. The frigate is the largest and most advanced warship China has ever exported, CSSC said.³⁴

The head of the Pakistan Navy Mission overseeing construction of the frigate, Commodore Rashid Mehmood Sheikh, revealed that the warship will become the navy's "mainstay," bolstering the service's maritime defence capabilities.³⁵

Pakistan's Ambassador to China, Moin ul Haque, called the delivery a "new chapter" in the already strong bilateral relations between the two countries, particularly praising developers for their timely delivery despite the COVID-19 pandemic.³⁶

Often dubbed as the all-weather ally of Pakistan, China has been beefing up its presence in the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean in the recent years. China has emerged as the biggest weapons supplier for the Pakistani military. Besides the advanced naval ships, China also partners with the Pakistan Air Force to build JF-17 Thunder fighter aircraft.

China Warns EU Not to Get Too Friendly with Taiwan as Delegation Visits Island

China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs reminded the European Union not to get too amiable with Taiwan as lawmakers from the blocs legislative branch visited the East Asian island, the Associated Press reported.³⁷ Though Taiwan is self-ruled, China claims it as part of its territory and has been increasingly assertive in recent months about establishing its dominance over the island.

China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a warning for the EU while voicing opposition to the delegation's visit, saying that it "urges the European side to correct its mistakes and not to send any wrong signals to the separatist forces of Taiwan independence, so as to avoid serious impact

³²<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202111/1238452.shtml>

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵<https://www.thedefensepost.com/2021/11/10/china-advanced-warship-pakistan/>

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷<https://www.newsweek.com/china-warns-european-union-not-get-too-friendly-taiwan-delegation-visits-island-1645935>

on China-EU relations. "Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin also commented during a daily briefing that "the fact that Taiwan is part of China cannot be changed," the AP reported.³⁸

It was the European Parliament's first official visit to Taiwan, according to the AP. Thirteen lawmakers from the Parliament's committee on foreign interference in democratic processes met with Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen on the second day of their three-day visit.

"We came here with a very simple, very clear message. You are not alone," said Raphael Glucksmann, the French chair of the committee. "Europe is standing with you, by you, in the defence of freedom and the defence of rule of law and human dignity". "It is high time for the European Union to step up its cooperation with Taiwan," she said.³⁹

Tsai kept her welcome remarks short, calling the visit "highly significant" and saying Taiwan was willing to share its experience in combating disinformation and that it wants to build a "democratic alliance" against disinformation.

The visit of the EU Parliament delegation coming close on the heels of China's hectic activities focused on Taiwan including record number of flights into Taiwan's ADIZ, an area of the Taiwanese Straits and continental Asia, has led to strong support for Taiwan all across. Such aggressive posturing by China would undoubtedly witness more engagement between Europe and the US with Taiwan.

Xi Jinping Secures His Political Future

The Chinese Communist Party adopted a landmark resolution on 11 Nov 21 that both rewrote its own history according to Xi, and elevated the President to a level only rivalled by iconic past leaders Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping. The "historical resolution" will pave the way for Xi, 68, to secure an unprecedented third term in office next year — and potentially rule China for life.⁴⁰

He is only the third leader to have a historical resolution adopted during his presidency, after Mao and Deng. This was Xi's "attempt to further consolidate his power and to define his historical legacy in the history of the party," said Jinghan Zeng, a professor of China and international studies at Lancaster University in Britain ahead of the plenum.⁴¹

Xi's political philosophy — called "Xi Jinping Thought" — is already being interwoven into Chinese society, added to educational textbooks from primary school to college. The historical resolution will now further entrench his personal leadership as the defining characteristic of Chinese politics for years and possibly decades to come.

In the weeks leading up to the meeting, state media praise for Xi was even more effusive than usual. A commentary in People's Daily, the party's flagship newspaper, called leadership the "most critical condition in the face of major historical junctures and tests." Safeguarding Xi's "core position" and the party's overall authority, it said, were "the fundamental guarantees for winning new victories" in China's modernization drive.⁴²

Adopting a historical resolution is a clear marker that this new era has begun, experts say. And the plenum drew a clear line between the resolution and the renewed authority given to the president.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/amp/rcna4796>

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid.

Its adoption was needed to "resolutely" uphold "comrade Xi Jinping's core position on the Central Committee and in the party as a whole," it said.⁴³

Along with Mao and Deng, Xi has already positioned himself among the most powerful leaders in post-revolutionary Chinese history. The removal of the two-term limit for presidents in 2018 has effectively allowed him to stay in office indefinitely.

In recent months, Xi has eschewed the growth-at-all-costs doctrine of his predecessors and instead focused on the slogan of "common prosperity" — going after China's tech giants and superrich with the promise of greater income distribution.

Philippines Redeploys Boats to a Disputed Shoal in SCS After Chinese Blockade

The Philippine military defiantly redeployed two supply boats on 22 Nov 21 to provide food to Filipino marines guarding a disputed shoal in the South China Sea after the Chinese coast guard used water cannons to forcibly turn the boats away in an assault last week that drew angry condemnation and warnings from Manila.

Defence Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said the two-civilian wooden-hulled boats carrying navy personnel left western Palawan province and should reach the marines stationed on a navy ship at Second Thomas Shoal after an overnight trip⁴⁴. Lorenzana said the boats aren't being escorted by the navy or coast guard in accordance with a request by China's ambassador to Manila, who, he said, assured him in talks over the weekend that the boats would not be blocked again.⁴⁵

A navy plane will nevertheless fly over the remote shoal, which has been surrounded by Chinese surveillance ships in a years-long territorial standoff, when the Filipino boats reach it, the defence chief said.⁴⁶The Philippines says the shoal is in its internationally recognized exclusive economic zone, but China insists it has sovereignty over the waters.

"The Chinese ambassador assured me they will not be impeded but they requested there should be no escort," Lorenzana told reporters.⁴⁷The government conveyed its "outrage, condemnation and protest of the incident" to China after two Chinese coast guard ships blocked the two Filipino boats on Tuesday and a third coast guard ship sprayed high-pressure streams of water on the boats, which were forced to abort their mission to transport food to the marines guarding the shoal, officials said.

Philippine Foreign Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. ordered Beijing's ships to back off and warned China that Manila's supply boats are covered by a mutual defence treaty with the United States. Washington later said it was standing by the Philippines "in the face of this escalation that directly threatens regional peace and stability," and reiterated "that an armed attack on Philippine public vessels in the South China Sea would invoke U.S. mutual defence commitments" under the 1951 U.S.-Philippines Mutual Defence Treaty.⁴⁸

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴<https://nationworldnews.com/philippines-redeploys-boats-after-chinese-blockade/>

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶<https://www.scmp.com/news/asia/southeast-asia/article/3156982/philippines-redeploys-supply-boats-disputed-south-china>

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid.

In Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian responded to the Philippine protests by saying that China's coast guard had upheld Chinese sovereignty after the Philippine ships entered Chinese waters at night without permission.⁴⁹

It was the latest flare-up in long-simmering territorial disputes in the strategic waterway, where China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan have overlapping claims. China claims virtually the entire South China Sea and has transformed seven shoals into missile-protected island bases to cement its assertions, ratcheting up tensions. China has recently renewed its call to the Philippines to tow away its navy ship BRP Sierra Madre, which Filipino marines have used as an outpost, and offered Chinese help, a Philippine official said on condition of anonymity because of a lack of authority to discuss the sensitive issue publicly.

But the Philippine government has said it will never withdraw from the shoal and cited a 2016 ruling by a U.N.-backed international arbitration panel that invalidated China's historic claims to virtually the entire South China Sea. China has rejected and continues to defy the ruling.

Maiden Flight of China's Carrier-Based Stealth Fighter Spotted

China's next-generation aircraft carrier-based fighter jet made its long-expected maiden flight recently with unverified photos of the prototype warplane in the sky circulating on social media platforms.⁵⁰ If true, this would mean a tremendous step for China's aircraft carrier program, observers said.

The photos show the carrier version of the FC-31 stealth fighter flying. It is painted with a blue-green primer, and it has the same twin canted tailfins, twin engines and high-mounted cockpit of the FC-31. But it adds a catapult launch bar and a wing-fold mechanism, confirming it is intended for carrier operations.⁵¹

Developed based on the FC-31, the aircraft carrier-version is almost a new aircraft, with many of the latest technologies applied, said experts and analysts reached by the Global Times. They declined to confirm the authenticity of the photos but said they are generally in line with predictions.

The FC-31 is China's second stealth fighter jet intended for technical demonstration and export purposes, and it made its maiden flight nine years ago. It has long been expected that the FC-31 would be upgraded to become China's next-generation aircraft carrier-based fighter jet.

During the Air show China 2021 held in September, Sun Cong, chief designer of the J-15, China's first-generation aircraft carrier-based fighter jet, as well as the FC-31, said at a press conference that, "This year, people should be able to see good news on the next-generation aircraft carrier-based fighter jet," and "When the aircraft is ready, people will get to see it."⁵²

Rumoured to be designated the J-35, China's aircraft carrier-based stealth fighter is only the world's second aircraft of its kind. It is believed to rival its US-made counterpart, the F-35, which is being provocatively deployed in large numbers by the US and its allies near China, analysts said.

It is apparent that the carrier-based fighter aircraft is at a good stage in the development progress, and they will likely operate from China's forthcoming, third aircraft carrier, which is expected to be larger than the previous two and equipped with electromagnetic catapults, analysts said.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202110/1237753.shtml?id=12>

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid.

China Busts Cyberattacks from India Targeted at China's Defence and Military Departments

A number of cyberattacks targeting China and countries in the South Asian Subcontinent have been busted this year with hackers from India behind the attempts to launch attacks on China's defence and military units as well as state-owned enterprises, Antiy Labs, the country's leading anti-virus company, announced on Monday.⁵³

According to vice chief engineer of Antiy Labs Li Bosong, the phishing activities they have detected since March mainly targeted the country's government, defence and military units, as well as state-owned enterprises in China, Pakistan and Nepal.⁵⁴

"The hackers disguise themselves as government or military personnel and deliver emails with phishing attachments or embedded links to targets luring them to visit the websites created by them and collect the account password for intelligence gathering," Li said.⁵⁵

Antiy Labs discovered that the organization behind the attacks is from India and its activities can be traced back to as early as April 2019.

By far, more than 100 phishing counterfeit websites have been found by Antiy Labs, some of which target major universities, state-owned enterprises and key organs of the government in China. Others target the military, defence, and diplomatic circles in South Asia, including Pakistan and Nepal.

"Once the phishing activities work, the email address will become the starting point of a new wave of cyberattacks that pose great threats to national and social security, as well as to the privacy of governments, entities and individuals," Li noted.

The phishing emails would trick receivers to download the files and trick the target to register on the fake email system. When the victim enters the account's password, the phishing website will send the victim's account information to the hackers.

When a phishing website is used, it will first show a message like "restricted" or "updating e-mail system." Then, the website will pop up a window asking to log in to the email account again. When this is done, the user will be switched to the fake email login site that the hackers have created.

China's New High-Tech Aircraft Carrier could Launch in Early 2022, Satellite Imagery Analysis Shows

A new Chinese aircraft carrier with technology nearly equalling the capabilities of its US counterparts could be launched as soon as February next year, according to an analysis of satellite imagery by a Washington-based think tank. In images provided by Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), the carrier -- known only as the Type 003 -- can be seen on the edge of completion on October 23, in the Jiangnan shipyard in Shanghai.⁵⁶

The installation of major external and internal components, including power plants and the aircraft launching system, appears to either be finished or on the verge of completion, CSIS said. Only a

⁵³<http://people'sdaily/en.people.cn/n3/2021/1102/c90000-9914265.html>

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶<https://www.edition.cnn.com/2021/11/09/china/china-aircraft-carrier-type-003-launch-satellite-imagery-intl-hnk/index.html>

few additional items -- such as radar and weapon systems -- remain to be installed before the vessel can slip into the Yangtze River, the analysts added.⁵⁷ "Based on available information and observed progress at Jiangnan, the authors estimate that the Type 003 will launch in roughly three to six months," CSIS said in a commentary published November 9.

Once it is ready, the ship will be China's third aircraft carrier and its second to be domestically produced. But unlike its sister ships, the Liaoning and the Shandong, experts said the Type 003 will feature more advanced aircraft launching technology, along the lines of the catapult system used by US aircraft carriers. The new launchers will allow China to launch a wider variety of planes from the Type 003 faster and with more ammunition.⁵⁸

Matthew Funaiole, senior fellow at the CSIS's China Project, said the Type 003 would be the Chinese military's "first foray into a modern aircraft carrier". "This is a pretty significant step forward," he said. "They've really committed to building out a carrier program, and they continue to push the boundaries of what they're able to do". "China wants to have a world-class navy. It wants to signal to the world that it has a world-class navy, (and) try to convince nations around the region or around the world that it is on par with the United States," he said. And the symbol of US naval power internationally is its fleet of aircraft carriers, Funaiole added.⁵⁹

China's first aircraft carrier, the Liaoning, was an unfinished Soviet-era vessel that Beijing bought from Ukraine in 1998, updated and finally commissioned in 2012. The Chinese military used the technological knowledge it gained from that vessel to build its first domestically constructed carrier, the Shandong, which entered service in December 2019.

However, despite the advanced launch system, Funaiole said there are still signs the Chinese carrier lags behind its US counterparts, which have more catapults, a larger airway and more elevators to allow for quicker deployment of aircraft.

All US aircraft carriers are also nuclear-powered, while the Type 003 is believed to run on conventional steam propulsion, which Funaiole said would limit its reach. "(Although) this may be less of a factor for China right now as many of its interests are in the near seas," he said.

China and the APEC CEO Meeting

Recently, President Xi Jinping attended the 28th Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Leaders Meeting).⁶⁰ The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation accounts almost 40 percent of world's population and half of the global trade.⁶¹ President Xi Jinping opined that "Asia-Pacific is a dream place for China as it would like to be the centre of the diplomatic process in the region and also establish itself as a leader in the region but also implement economic diplomacy as part of the maritime silk route."⁶²

On 11 November 2021, Chinese President Xi Jinping attended the APEC CEO Summit highlighted certain key points where he opined that "Asia-Pacific is an important engine driving the world economy" and due to the COVID 19 Pandemic, the economic situation needs to be revived. Further, he highlighted the significance of the industrial supply chains which must be kept open. President

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202111/1238667.shtml>

⁶¹<https://www.dw.com/en/chinas-president-xi-touts-asia-pacific-dream-ahead-of-apec-summit/a-18050065>

⁶²<https://thediplomat.com/2014/11/the-beijing-apec-summit-in-review/>

Xi Jinping expressed that China was committed towards the World Trade Organisation (WTO) based multilateral trading system.⁶³

China downgrading of Diplomatic ties with Lithuania

China has opposed the move of Lithuania to allow a de-facto Embassy of Taiwan. China used diplomatic coercive measures to downgrade the diplomatic relations with Lithuania. China called back its Ambassador on account of violation of 'One China Principle' and the gross interference of internal affairs of the China. Taiwan Mainland Affairs Council said "China has no right to speak for Taiwan as it is an independent country". The European Union (EU) spokesperson said that "the EU will stand by Lithuania in the face of the Chinese diplomatic coercion"⁶⁴.

In spite of the China's diplomatic coercion and downgrading of diplomatic relations to the level of charge de affairs, Lithuania has allowed Taipei to establish the 'Taiwanese Representative Office in Lithuania' on November 18.⁶⁵ Lithuania withstood diplomatic pressure of China and took the right step in the direction of Taiwan finding its own space on the global stage.⁶⁶ China opposed any use of the Taiwan in its official use of the term as China considers Taiwan is an integral part of China. China not just downgraded the diplomatic relations but also halted the freight trains to Lithuania and also denied the food exports permits in retaliatory measures to Lithuania. They also announced that it would be leaving the cooperation forum of China's 17+1 Central and Eastern European states.⁶⁷

President Biden and President Xi Jinping Virtual Summit

Owing to the COVID 19 Pandemic, the Summit between the President Biden and the President Xi Jinping was held virtually on November 15. President Xi Jinping was critiqued that he hasn't moved out of China since the outbreak of COVID 19 in Wuhan. President Biden wanted a virtual meet as he wanted to know what were the intentions of President Xi Jinping on issues of COVID 19 health challenges, Taiwan Straits and the Indo-Pacific.

Since, the last year onwards, China and the US relations entered the phase of strategic confrontation and the US took measures of high-tech decoupling and now, with the virtual meeting, it showcased the position of the US policy in a different light.⁶⁸ President Xi Jinping said "China and the US are the major economies and the members of the UN Security Council" and so, both the countries need to improve communication and cooperation. China would like the US to recognize it to be a major and equal power to the United States and also respect the core interests and address major concerns.⁶⁹

On the other hand, the US President's intentions were diplomatically paced as he stated that the "competition between China and the United States will not lead to conflict intended or unintended". Further, President Biden asserted that the US was ready to defend values and interests globally along with its allies and friends.⁷⁰ He also focused on the Taiwan question and assured that the

⁶³http://www.news.cn/english/2021-11/11/c_1310303453.htm

⁶⁴<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/china-downgrades-its-diplomatic-ties-with-lithuania-over-taiwan-issue-2021-11-21/>

⁶⁵<https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/china-downgrades-diplomatic-ties-with-lithuania-over-taiwan-office-opening-101637502998533.html>

⁶⁶<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/21/china-downgrades-diplomatic-relations-with-lithuania-over-taiwan-row>

⁶⁷<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2021/11/21/asia-pacific/politics-diplomacy-asia-pacific/lithuania-china-taiwan/>

⁶⁸<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202111/1239087.shtml>

⁶⁹<http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202111/16/WS619363b3a310cdd39bc75a96.html>

⁷⁰<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/11/16/readout-of-president-bidens-virtual-meeting-w>

US was committed to the 'One China Policy' guided by the Taiwan Relations Act. And warned that any attempt to make changes in the status quo of Taiwan or the Taiwan Strait would have severe consequences.⁷¹ Finally, President Biden conveyed to the domestic audience and to the Chinese President Xi Jinping that "America is concerned about the Chinese unfair practices and those need to be corrected in order to protect the American industries and workers."⁷²

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⁷¹<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-biden-xi-summit-why-it-matters-to-india-7626109/>

⁷²<https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/11/15/world/biden-xi-summit>

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