



CCAS CHINA NEWS
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CHINA-LEADERSHIP: REPORTS OF DETENTIONS OF SENIOR PLA AND CCP LEADERS AND LETTER ADDRESSED BY 'PRINCELINGS' TO CCP MEMBERS URGING XI JINPING'S OUSTER

Rumours have been circulating in Beijing that Chinese President Xi Jinping has been having serious problems with senior sections in the CCP leadership. On January 5 a report from Hongkong claimed that ex-President Hu Jintao's son Hu Haifung, who was said to be due for elevation as a central Vice Minister, had 'disappeared' and been missing for two days. His name is banned on the Chinese internet. Around the same time, other reports said former Vice Chairman of the CMC and PLAAF Commander Xu Qiliang had been placed under detention and is under investigation. Former PLAAF Commander Ding Laiheng is reportedly also under investigation for corruption in construction of an airfield in Beijing. Reports also claim that Liu He, till recently Chinese President Xi Jinping's economic advisor and probably one of his oldest, trusted friends, has been arrested. Liu He has not been seen in public for three weeks and his arrest is said to be the result of discussions with Liu Yuan, son of former Chinese President Liu Shaoqi, to stop Xi Jinping's personal dictatorship. An article in Taiwan's Liberty Times (January 10) claimed that Liu Yuan is the 'leader' of the second generation 'Red Princelings'.

ii) Meanwhile, General Liu Yuan, son of former Chinese President Li Xiannian, was placed under detention. Reports say that he was instrumental in drafting and submitting a petition signed by the 'princelings' expressing displeasure with Xi Jinping and urging Xi Jinping's removal. The petition has been addressed to all members of the CCP. Prominent among the signatories are: Deng Xiaoping 's son Deng Pufang, Zhou Enlai's children, Chen Yun's children, Marshal Ye Jianying's children, Hu Yaobang's son Hu Deping, Bo Xiali's siblings, etc. A number of PLA Generals are said to be among those who have signed the petition.

(Comment: The 'princelings' have earlier too, in March 2020, called for Xi Jinping's removal. Their calling again for Xi Jinping's removal together with a number of PLA Generals suggests that problems are serious this time.)

CHINA-LEADERSHIP: CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING STRESSES LOYALTY TO PARTY AND PARTY DISCIPLINE AT CENTRAL FOREIGN AFFAIRS WORK CONFERENCE

Addressing China's diplomats at the once-in-five-year China Foreign Affairs Work Conference held in Beijing on December 27-28, 2023, Chinese President Xi Jinping urged them to forge a "diplomatic iron army" loyal to the Communist Party "with a posture of readiness and a firm will to defy strong powers". According to state-owned CCTV, he asked them to "Dare to be good at struggle and to become defenders of the national interest. It is necessary to... resolutely safeguard the interests of national sovereignty, security and development with a posture of readiness and a firm will to defy strong powers." He also urged envoys to adhere to Party discipline, repeating the word "strict" seven times. He said, "It is necessary to put rules and discipline in front, strictly discipline oneself, take strict responsibility... and create a diplomatic iron army that is loyal to the Party... dares to and is good at struggle, and observes strict discipline." A Xinhua commentary clarified that the diplomats "were not being urged to put on a menacing face before the world. Instead, they were being encouraged to act on their best behaviour and not bend the rules." Xi Jinping said "Loyalty to the Party, the country and the people is the glorious tradition of the diplomatic front" and "It is necessary to build a strong line of ideological defence... and be an astute person with firm political beliefs who strictly complies with rules and discipline." He also emphasised the need for China to increase its international influence to combat what he believes are the West's attempts to contain and suppress China, repeating the word "struggle" five times. Xi Jinping said "We must make broad and deep friendships, and the fight to win people's hearts must be carried out at all levels. We must use foreign language and methods to tell the China story well." Xi Jinping also lashed out against the West's "bullying" and "hegemony", urging diplomats and officials to "carry forward our fighting spirit".

CHINA-LEADERSHIP: CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING ATTENDS CDIC'S THIRD PLENARY SESSION (JANUARY 8-10) IN BEIJING

Chinese President Xi Jinping attended the third plenary session of the Central Discipline Inspection Commission (CDIC) held in Beijing from January 8-10, 2023. Li Qiang, Zhao Leji, Wang Huning, Cai Qi, Ding Xuexiang and Li Xi attended the session where Xi Jinping delivered an "important" speech. Politburo Standing Committee member and Secretary of the CDIC, Li Xi presided over the session. The session adopted a communique which highlighted "the importance of upholding Comrade Xi Jinping's core position on the Party Central Committee and in the Party as a whole, and the Party Central Committee's authority and its centralized, unified leadership". The communique called for enhancing political oversight and prompt actions to remove all potential political dangers and underlined the need to eliminate the breeding ground of corruption. It called for efforts to constantly intensify the fight against corruption, continue to focus on the key issues, give priority to punishing corruption involving the collusion between officials and businesspeople, tackling cross-border corruption, and deepening the implementation of the central Party leadership's eight-point decision on improving conduct on a regular basis and in a long-term manner. It highlighted the need for strict steps to tighten Party discipline, and called for Party discipline education and hard work to resolve issues such as paying inadequate attention to, failing to comprehend or failing to master Party rules and discipline.

CHINA-LEADERSHIP: CHINA DAILY HIGHLIGHTS CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING'S NATIONWIDE TOURS LAST YEAR

The China Daily (January 12) highlighted that last year Chinese President Xi Jinping made 16 domestic fact-finding trips nationwide last year, traveling to 15 provincial-level regions and outlining key steps for rural modernization, ecological protection, self-reliance in science and technology, and the drive for common prosperity.

CHINA-LEADERSHIP: REPORT MENTIONS 'SHANDONG FACTION' AS RISING IN CCP

A report states that Chinese President Xi Jinping's wife, Peng Liyuan's Shandong faction (she is from Yuncheng, Shandong) appears to be on the rise in China's Communist Party (CCP).

Among the 205 full members of the Party's Central Committee, the appointees from Shandong are the most numerous, with 32 members. In the CCP CC Politburo at least two are identified with Peng Liyuan. The report mentions Hu Zhongming, who took over as PLA Navy Commander and was promoted to admiral on December 25, 2023, and is a member of the 20th Central Committee; Sun Yeli, Minister of Culture and Tourism; Dong Jun who was appointed Minister of Defense; Hu Heping, the current Executive Deputy Minister of the Propaganda Department of the CCP CC who resigned as Minister of Culture and Tourism; Li Qun, the current Vice Minister of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and Director of the State Administration of Cultural Heritage; and Du Jiang, the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. The report lists many others with connections to Shandong.

CHINA-LEADERSHIP: CHINESE PREMIER LI QIANG TO ATTEND DAVOS AND VISIT SWITZERLAND AND IRELAND

Chinese Premier Li Qiang will attend the WEF annual meeting at Davos and visit Switzerland and Ireland from January 14-17.

CHINA-LEADERSHIP: CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTER WANG YI TO VISIT EGYPT, TUNISIA, TOGO, COTE D'IVORE, BRAZIL AND JAMAICA

Beijing Daily (January 11) reported that Chinese Foreign Minister and Politburo member Wang Yi will visit Egypt, Tunisia, Togo, Cote d'Ivoire from January 13-18 and thereafter visit Brazil, and Jamaica from January 18-22. Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) spokesperson said this is also the first visit to Africa by a Chinese foreign minister for 34 consecutive years.

CHINA-LEADERSHIP: CMC VICE CHAIRMAN GENERAL HE WEIDONG MEETS NEWLY ELECTED ACADEMICIANS OF CAS AND CAE

Politburo member and CMC Vice Chairman General He Weidong, met in Beijing on January 10 with newly elected academicians of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) and the Chinese Academy of Engineering (CAE) from the military. He stressed that academicians from the military should take the lead for combat readiness, and pioneer scientific and technological innovation. General He Weidong stated that academicians from the military should seek breakthroughs in innovation, insist on actual-combat orientation and cost-effective innovation,

and strive to seize the commanding heights of the scientific and technological competition and accelerate the effective supply of advanced combat power. They should also be adept at fostering high-level scientific and technological innovation talents.

General He Weidong stressed that the competent CMC organs should provide them with support in work and care in life to motivate them to make contributions to the cause of building a strong military. Admiral Miao Hua, member of the CMC and director of the CMC's Political Work Department, also attended the meeting.

CHINA-SENIOR APPOINTMENTS: LIU ZHENMIN HAS TAKEN OVER AS CHINA'S SPECIAL ENVOY FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

The Beijing Daily (January 12) reported that Liu Zhenmin, former Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and Deputy Secretary General in the U.N., took over as China's Special Envoy for Climate Change. The former Envoy, Xie Zhenhua resigned on grounds of health.

CHINA-SENIOR APPOINTMENTS: SI YONG APPOINTED NEW DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL OF JIANGSU

Si Yong, Secretary of the Jiangsu Provincial Committee of the Communist Youth League, was appointed Deputy Secretary-General of the Jiangsu Provincial Government on January 9, 2023. Born in December 1979 in Zhumadian, Henan Province, he has a postgraduate degree and a master's degree. He joined the Communist Party of China in December 1998 and started working in August 2004. Si Yong graduated from Dalian University of Technology in 2001 and later studied for a master's degree in the Department of Precision Instruments and Mechanics of Tsinghua University.

CHINA-SENIOR APPOINTMENTS: ZHU XINKAI APPOINTED EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT OF CHINA'S RENMIN UNIVERSITY

The official website of Renmin University of China disclosed that Zhu Xinkai (born in December 1974, from Peixian County, Jiangsu Province) has been appointed as a member of the Standing Committee of the Party Committee and Executive Vice President of Renmin University of China.

**CHINA-CCP: CENTRAL PARTY SCHOOL PUBLISHES ARTICLE ON CULTURE
IN PEOPLE'S DAILY**

The People's Daily (January 11) published a lengthy article titled 'Deeply understand the rich connotations of Xi Jinping's cultural thoughts (in-depth study and implementation of Xi Jinping's socialist thoughts with Chinese characteristics for a new era)' by the CCP CC Party School College Affairs Committee, which asserted that "Culture is related to the foundation and destiny of the country. When culture flourishes, the country flourishes, and when culture is strong, the nation is strong". It stressed "Upholding the party's cultural leadership is a major matter related to the future and destiny of the party and the country."

**CHINA-ANTI-CORRUPTION: XI'AN INTERMEDIATE PEOPLE'S COURT
SENTENCES FORMER TAR VICE CHAIRMAN ZHANG YONGZE TO 14 YEARS
IN PRISON**

On January 10, the Xi'an Intermediate People's Court of Shaanxi Province publicly sentenced Zhang Yongze, a former party member and Vice Chairman of the People's Government of the Tibet Autonomous Region, for accepting bribes. Zhang Yongze was sentenced to 14 years in prison for accepting bribes and fined RMB 5 One million yuan. The court ruled that the stolen money, stolen goods and their interest that have been seized, detained, and frozen shall be recovered in accordance with the law and turned over to the state treasury. Zhang Yongze pleaded guilty in court and would not appeal.

**CHINA-ANTI-CORRUPTION: SENIOR CCP CADRES AND CHAIRMAN OF
CHINA'S EVERBRIGHT GROUP EXPELLED FROM CCP**

The People's Daily (January 6) disclosed that Tang Shuangning, former Party chief and Chairman of China Everbright Group, has been expelled from the Communist Party of China (CCP) over serious violations of discipline and law. The political verdict of expelled former Party Secretary of Everbright, Tang Shuangning notes that he had "inadequately prevented and resolved financial risks" and that he also "brought publications with serious political issues into the country and read them."

ii) The People's Daily (January 6) reported that Chen Jixing, a former Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Guangdong Provincial People's Congress, has been expelled from the Communist Party of China (CCP) over serious violations of discipline and law.

iii) Wang Heqing, former Party Secretary of Chongqing's Research Institute for Culture and History has been expelled from the Party and handed over to prosecutors for, among other things, being associated with "political fraudsters" for political opportunism.

(Comment: Analysts have noted that the term "political fraudsters" has not been used often but its use is becoming more common. It was used 2 times in 2021; 3 times in 2022; and 12 times in 2023 out of a dataset of 10,259 political verdicts.)

CHINA-ANTI-CORRUPTION: STATE-OWNED CCTV PUBLICISES VIGOROUS DRIVE AGAINST CORRUPTION AND 'TWO-FACED PEOPLE', POWERFUL INTEREST GROUPS ETC

The state-owned CCTV (January 6) telecast a report asserting that 'Corruption is the biggest cancer that harms the vitality and combat effectiveness of the party, and anti-corruption is the most thorough self-revolution'. It stated that in his report to the CCP's 20th National Congress, Chinese President Xi Jinping made 'comprehensive arrangements for resolutely winning the tough and protracted battle against corruption on the new journey' and said 'The Party Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core has carried forward a thorough self-revolutionary spirit, continued to make efforts and deepen the anti-corruption struggle, and continued to purify the political ecology within the party. The situation of the anti-corruption struggle remains severe and complex, and the task of containing the increase and clearing out the existing remains arduous'. Asserting that 'disciplinary inspection and supervision agencies at all levels will adhere to a zero-tolerance attitude towards anti-corruption' and that they will 'punish evil, strictly investigate key issues, resolutely investigate and deal with corruption where political issues and economic issues are intertwined, resolutely prevent leading cadres from becoming spokespersons and agents of interest groups and powerful groups, and resolutely prevent political and business collusion and capital from infiltrating into the political field from damaging the political ecology and economic development environment'. It stressed that the Party 'will continue to focus on the "seven problems", resolutely eliminate the "two-faced people" who have degenerated politically and are disloyal and dishonest to the party, and

severely crack down on those so-called "background" political liars; Carry out special rectification on systemic and regional corruption issues' and listed the cases of some senior cadres punished for corruption. It noted that in 2023, the website of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection and the State Supervision Commission publicly released news that 45 central management cadres were subject to review and investigation. From January to November 2023, disciplinary inspection and supervision agencies at all levels kept a close eye on "corruption" around the people, investigated and dealt with 67,000 cases of unhealthy practices and corruption in the field of people's livelihood, and criticized, educated and punished 96,000 people. The "Skynet 2023" operation recovered a total of 1,278 fugitives, including 140 party members and state workers, and 48 "red notice personnel", and recovered 2.912 billion yuan in stolen money. A series of data strongly indicate that the overwhelming victory in the fight against corruption continues to be consolidated.

ii) A People's Daily (January 11) Commentary titled 'Deeply study and implement General Secretary Xi Jinping's important thoughts on the Party's self-revolution' declared that "The third plenary session of the 20th Central Commission for Discipline Inspection is an important meeting to further promote the party's self-revolution and comprehensively and strictly govern the party on the new journey" adding that Chinese President Xi Jinping delivered an important speech at the plenary session. It said he "profoundly elaborated on the party's important thought of self-revolution makes strategic arrangements for continued efforts and in-depth advancement of the anti-corruption struggle, and provides fundamental guidance for the new era and new journey to further promote comprehensive and strict governance of the party, the construction of party style and clean government, and the anti-corruption struggle. Party organizations and party members and cadres at all levels must thoroughly study and implement the spirit of the conference, deeply understand the decisive significance of the "two establishments", strengthen the "four consciousnesses", strengthen the "four self-confidences", achieve "two safeguards", and effectively implement the ideological and actions should be unified with the spirit of General Secretary Xi Jinping's important speeches and the decisions and arrangements of the Party Central Committee, and carry out the Party's self-revolution to the end". It underscored "We must adhere to the centralized and unified leadership of the Party Central Committee as the fundamental guarantee, and always make unified planning, deployment, and advancement under the leadership of the Party Central Committee to ensure that we move in the right direction."

iii) The state-owned CCTV (January 11) carried a special report on the meeting where it said "From the perspective of coordinating the overall strategy of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and the world's major changes unseen in a century, he profoundly summarized the comprehensive aspects of the new era". It quoted Xi Jinping as saying "We must be more rigorous and make the self-revolution on every front and every link concrete and in-depth"iv) The People's Daily (January 11) reprinted a Xinhua (January 11) despatch stating that "the Party has found a second answer to the question of how to escape the historical cycle of rise and fall: self-reform. Placing the government under the supervision of the people is the first answer. The problem of lax and weak self-governance in Party organisations has been addressed at the root, and a political atmosphere of integrity within the Party has been steadily fostered and developed. By doing so, it has been ensured that the Party will never change its nature, its conviction, or its character".

iv) On January 10, the website of the Central Discipline Inspection Commission and the State Supervision Commission disclosed that Du Jintao, the former Party Secretary and General Manager of the Shenzhen Branch of Taiping Life Insurance Co., Ltd. (hereinafter referred to as "Taiping Life"), is under investigation for suspected serious violations of discipline and law.

CHINA-MINERAL RESOURCES: NPC STANDING COMMITTEE RELEASES DRAFT MINERAL RESOURCES LAW FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

On January 3, the National People's Congress Standing Committee (NPCSC) released the draft revision of the Mineral Resources Law for public comment. The amended text puts domestic mineral resources, like nickel, lithium, and rare earth elements feeding China's most critical high-tech industries – from tech and defense to energy and transportation, at the heart of economic security. To safeguard these sectors, the law calls for massive expansion of domestic resource extraction and promises government support for new exploration and development.

(Comment: China is the world's top processor of many critical minerals, but remains largely dependent on raw material imports.)

CHINA-AGRICULTURE: GUANGMING DAILY INTERVIEW HIGHLIGHTS POOR QUALITY OF CHINA'S LAND RESOURCES AND PLANS TO BUILD MORE GRAIN FIELDS INTO FERTILE FARMLAND

The Guangming Daily (January 11) published an interview with Guo Yongtian, Director of the Farmland Construction and Management Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, under the caption 'Build high-standard farmland to turn more grain fields into fertile farmland'. It recalled last year's Central Economic Work Conference and quoted Guo Yongtian as stating that "China's natural endowment of cultivated land resources is relatively poor. The overall quality of cultivated land is not high. The proportion of good light, heat and soil matching is not high. There are many sloping cultivated lands and fragmented cultivated lands. The soil is relatively infertile. In addition, the rapid advancement of industrialization and urbanization has resulted in the decline of cultivated land. Changes in spatial layout and the previous high-input and high-output use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides have led to the degradation of cultivated land quality in some areas. Overall, China's cultivated land protection and construction still faces some difficulties and challenges" and that "To strengthen a country, we must first strengthen agriculture, and only then can the country be strong" Talking about steps to improve grain production, he said 79.27 million acres of high-standard farmland will be built, renovated and upgraded, completing 99% of the annual task and 13 major grain-producing provinces have built high-standard farmland, accounting for about 70% of the country's built-up area..

CHINA-ECONOMY: CCP CC AND STATE COUNCIL ISSUE JOINT ORDERS MANDATING THAT BY 2027 NEW ENERGY VEHICLES WILL ACCOUNT FOR 45 PER CENT OF TOTAL IN CHINA

The Beijing Evening News (January 11) reported that the CCP CC and the State Council issued opinions on comprehensively promoting the construction of a beautiful China, which proposed that by 2027, new energy vehicles will account for 45% of new vehicles, old diesel locomotives will be basically eliminated, and the rail-water intermodal transport volume of port containers will remain rapid. growth; by 2035, railway freight turnover will account for about 25% of the total turnover.

CHINA-ECONOMY: CHINA LABOUR BULLETIN CLAIMS NUMBER OF PROTESTS IN CHINA DOUBLED IN 2023

China Labor Bulletin (CLB), a Hong Kong non-profit organization said that 1,779 protests were reported as of December 31 amid massive layoffs, reduced wages, and business closures in the country. It said Chinese workers staged twice as many protests to defend their rights in 2023 compared to the previous year, and cited China observers say that such widespread demonstrations could lead to the downfall of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

CHINA-S&T: NON-STATE COMMERCIAL SPACE COMPANY 'ORIENSAPCE' LAUNCHED THREE SATELLITES FROM A SHIP ON JANUARY 11

According to its post in Shandong on January 11, Orienspace, a non-state commercial space company in China just sent satellites into space using its own rocket. Founded in 2020, it sent three satellites from a ship in eastern China's Shandong Province on January 11. The post said at 13:30 on January 11, 2024, China's Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center used the Gravity-1 (Yao-1) Heilan Home launch vehicle in the sea near Haiyang, Shandong, and will carry 18-20 Yunyao-1 satellites. A total of three satellites were successfully put into the predetermined orbit, and the flight test mission was a complete success.

CHINA-S&T: CHINESE SCIENTISTS CLAIM TO HAVE DEVELOPED A 'REVOLUTIONARY' AIR-BREATHING ENGINE

The Hongkong-based South China Morning Post said that Chinese scientists claimed a breakthrough in hypersonic tech with the development of a "revolutionary" air-breathing engine detailed in a peer reviewed paper. The engine, designed by a team led by Zhang Yining at the Beijing Power Machinery Institute, operates in two modes rotating detonation below Mach 7 and oblique detonation above Mach 7, enabling an ac to reach speeds 16 times the speed of sound. It said the development highlights China's ongoing progress in hypersonic tech, marking a competitive edge in the global aerospace arena.

CHINA-SECURITY: MOSS UNCOVERS FOREIGN ESPIONAGE EFFORT AT "CRITICAL" NAVAL BASE

The Global Times (December 27) said that China's Ministry of State Security (MoSS) recently exposed a 'substantial national security threat' posed by a foreign company suspected of espionage near a critical naval base, which houses advanced weaponry. The discovery includes strategically placed covert surveillance equipment emitting a green light, intended for the remote observation of China's military assets. The MSS is urging collaborative efforts between the government and citizens to protect national interests, emphasizing the continuous diligence required to uphold the integrity of the country's defence capabilities in the face of evolving security challenges.

CHINA-OVERSEAS SECURITY: CHINA CONTEMPLATING BOOSTING SECURITY FOR FIRMS OPERATING ABROAD

An article in the South China Morning Post (December 24) said that China is building up private security to protect overseas interests in hostile, unstable regions. It said conflicts may be further reinforcing the need for Beijing to make new contingency plans to safeguard Chinese interests abroad while ensuring that trade routes continue to bring home critical goods such as valuable minerals. However, given Beijing's limited military presence overseas – it has only one overseas base, in the Horn of Africa; contributes to a UN peacekeeping force; and uses naval warships in anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden. It cited analysts to say that diplomacy and the use of private security firms will be increasingly relied on, particularly in facilitating the China-led Belt and Road Initiative. At a seminar in early December, jointly held by the China-Africa Business Council and the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations, participants raised the bar for Chinese security firms – pushing for them to become more internationalised, more localised with regional staff and political support, and more commercialised. “Outbound Chinese investors face security challenges and a complex environment,” said an official statement summarising the meeting. “A tailor-made approach is needed for international security projects. It must differ depending on the industry or country.” It noted that the African continent is one of the regions China is invested heavily in, where the number of China-invested companies accounts for 7.1 per cent of the global total. It said most of China's new investment in the past decade flowed to countries included in China's belt and road plans, despite many being relatively high-risk regions. China is the world's major

seaborne buyer of iron ore, copper, soybeans and many other commodities, while more than 1 million Chinese students are studying overseas and tens of millions of Chinese travel worldwide every year. For their part, private security firms in China tend to fly under the radar. However, the seminar this month drew some of the domestic security heavyweights together, including Huayuan Security Guard; Dewe Security, a subsidiary of Hong Kong-listed Frontier Services Group; Huaxin Zhongan Group; Shanghai-listed Anbang Save-Guard Group; officials from China's foreign ministry; representatives from the China Security Association; and dozens of other Chinese firms. A Belt and Road Initiative working group issued an official document in late November highlighting the need to "hammer out the safety protection in a detailed way", state media Xinhua reported. In an online statement published last month, the Ministry of State Security also vowed to ensure the security of China's overseas mining projects, personnel and assets. "It is set to ensure the safety of Chinese companies 'going global', and safeguard the security of key mineral-resource supply chains," it said, without elaborating on how. Even though some of China's security firms are privately owned, they often have historical ties with the army or police forces. Take Huaxin Zhongan, for instance. It was set up by military veterans in 2004, and 70 per cent of its mid-level or top management are veterans. To serve more than 60 overseas clients in countries such as Uganda, Malaysia and Pakistan, the company has more than 800 employees overseas, of which 660 are expatriates, according to its website. The company specialises in escorting shipments and countering low-altitude drones, but its main business involves providing security guards for Chinese projects, along with risk assessments and consulting.

CHINA-PLA: PLA DAILY COMMENTARY HIGHLIGHTS NEED TO TACKLE CORRUPTION IN PLA

A PLA Commentary (January 12) titled 'The more effective the military is in fighting corruption, the more effective it will be' called on the authorities to "Continue to make efforts to advance the anti-corruption struggle in depth". The Commentary said "We must have a clear understanding of the new situations and new trends in the fight against corruption, as well as the soil and conditions that create corruption problems. With tenacity and persistence that is always on the road, we must exert precise and sustained efforts to resolutely win the fight against corruption. The fight against corruption must be a protracted one." It said also that "Corruption is the biggest cancer that harms the vitality and combat effectiveness of the party and is the biggest threat our party faces". It asserted: "The military is armed with guns, and

corruption cannot have a place in the party, especially in our military. The more powerful the military is in fighting corruption, the purer and more effective it will be" and that the "entire military must" ... "make the Party's self-revolution ideas and measures more rigorous, and solidly promote Strict governance of the Party and the military will be developed in an all-round way. We must focus on preparing for war, improve the system and mechanism to prevent the spread of corruption, insist on advancing in an integrated way if we dare not corrupt, cannot corrupt, and do not want to corrupt".

CHINA-PLA: WASHINGTON-BASED CSIS REPORT REVEALS THAT INDIAN OCEAN IS BECOMING ONE OF THE BIGGEST DOMAINS FOR CHINESE OCEANIC SURVEYS

Writing in the Washington Post (January 10) defence correspondent Cate Cadell cited a report prepared by the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), which analyses hundreds of thousands of hours of shipping data since 2020 and shows that the Indian Ocean is fast becoming one of the biggest domains for Chinese oceanic surveys, which are ostensibly civilian in nature but tied to the PLA and Beijing's military-civil fusion program. It notes that while the types of ocean surveys carried out by the vessels have research applications for energy resources and marine environments, but the data collected can also be used for military purposes, including how to manoeuvre and obscure submarines during conflict. The CSIS report found that of the 13 vessels undertaking the bulk of survey and research activity in the Indian Ocean since 2020, all have links to China's military — including organizational ties to the PLA — and have displayed suspicious behaviour including docking at Chinese military ports or temporarily turning off tracking devices. Matthew Funaiole, a senior fellow at CSIS who worked on the report, said "The Indian Ocean is critical to China's strategic and economic interests, as well as its geopolitical rivalry with India." "Beijing is serious about fielding a blue-water navy, one that will be active in the Indian Ocean, and blurring the lines between its research ecosystem and its national security apparatus will help it get there." The CSIS report said that at least 80 percent of China's 64 civilian research vessels operating globally since 2020 have displayed "warning indicators" that their work is tied to military objectives. Over half of those suspect vessels operated in the South China Sea, but their growing presence in the Indian Ocean has also stoked tensions. It noted that the previous week, Sri Lanka declared a moratorium on Chinese research vessels entering its waters under what analysts say was intense pressure from India. New Delhi has aired concerns that the research

vessels — some of which have previously docked in Sri Lanka — are being used to monitor waters and instalments in India's sphere of influence. Sri Lanka, which took on nearly \$12 billion in Chinese loans between 2000 and 2020, has struggled to balance the competing demands of Beijing and New Delhi, analysts say.

CHINA-PLA: PLA EXERCISES IN TIBET AND WESTERN THEATRE COMMAND

i) A report in Huaxia (January 3) revealed that in a proactive initiative in the Lhasa Garrison District of Tibet, a Regiment is currently undergoing rigorous winter trg to enhance the skills of its officers and soldiers. The focus lies on specialized areas such as assassination training and combined operations in the challenging alpine mountains. Notably, during tactical training, the infantry squad exhibited adaptability in squad attack, squad defence, and vigilance, carrying over 20 kgs of weaponry through the demanding alpine terrain.

ii) China showcased its cutting-edge military technology with the debut of the Type 625 integrated air defence system during a live-fire exercise in the Western Theater Command. Termed a "drone killer," the system represents an upgrade from the "Armor" S1 air defence system, featuring an 8-wheel off-road tactical chassis for enhanced mobility. Armed with six 25mm "Gatling" cannons and four short-range surface-to-air missiles, the Type 625 is specifically designed to counter low altitude threats such as drones and FPV flying machines. Its advanced fire control unit, including a 360° rotating active phased array radar, ensures robust firepower and several capabilities against airborne adversaries.

iii) CCTV (December 28) reported that the PLA Western Theatre Command Air Force recently conducted a significant training exercise between the Y-20 and Y-9 transport aircraft to improve their precision delivery capabilities. The evaluation involved tactical exercises, simulations, and assessments, with a focus on optimizing functions like cargo drops, paratrooper deployments, and logistical support efficiency. The exercises provided a platform for aircrew and ground support personnel to share best practices, enhancing overall operational effectiveness.

CHINA-PLA: CHINA'S ARMED FORCES LAUNCH ANNUAL TRAINING SESSIONS FOR 2024 WITH FOCUS ON IMPROVING COMBAT CAPABILITY

China Daily (January 5) disclosed that the Chinese military has opened its annual training sessions for 2024, focusing on improving combat capability. It said the PLA Ground Force held a launch ceremony at a training ground in Guangdong on January 2 to mark the beginning of the annual training. General Li Qiaoming, Commander of the PLA Ground Force, and General Qin Shutong, the force's Political Commissar, took part in the ceremony and addressed more than 3,000 troops from a combined brigade. Combat ships, submarines and aircraft from the PLA Navy have been mobilized for live-fire exercises. Sailors and naval aviators honed their skills in gunfire, missile launching, electronic warfare operations and air-defense and anti-submarine tasks. The PLA Air Force said its aviation and air-defense units have taken part in intense drills since the beginning of the new year, publishing a video showing aircraft, radars and missile launchers in action. The People's Armed Police Force also organized mass gatherings at its units' training grounds across the country, putting officers and soldiers in realistic battle scenarios. Meanwhile, all of the PLA's regional theatre commands — central, northern, eastern, southern and western — have ordered forces under their direct control to carry out training and exercises according to the latest annual plans. Commanders stressed that troops must continue to improve their joint operational capabilities. In another development, the PLA Southern Theater Command announced that it has organized naval and air forces to conduct routine patrols in the South China Sea on January 4 and 5.

CHINA-PLA: CHINESE PLA DEFECTOR CLAIMS FIFTY PERCENT OF PLARF OFFICERS WANT TO LEAVE THEIR JOBS

Yao Cheng, former Lieutenant Colonel staff officer of the Chinese Navy Command, posted on the 'X' platform on the 7th of January that the PLA Rocket Force is currently disorganized and more than half of its Captain-level officers want to change jobs.

CHINA-GUANGDONG: GUANGDONG GOVERNOR PRESIDES OVER PARTY LEADERSHIP GROUP MEETING

The Nanfang Daily (January 11) reported that on January 11, Wang Weizhong, Secretary of the Party Leadership Group of the Provincial Government and Governor, presided over a

meeting of the Party Leadership Group of the Provincial Government to convey and learn from General Secretary Xi Jinping's speech at the meeting of the Politburo Standing Committee. The meeting resolved that the spirit of the important speeches in the work report of the Party Group and the work report of the Central Secretariat shall be implemented, and the instructions and requirements of the Standing Committee of the Provincial Party Committee shall be implemented. The meeting emphasized that "we must deeply understand the decisive significance of the "two establishments", strengthen the "four consciousnesses", strengthen the "four self-confidences", achieve "two safeguards", and persist in using Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era We must thoroughly study and implement the spirit of General Secretary Xi Jinping's important speeches and important instructions during his inspection of Guangdong". It said "it is necessary to effectively shoulder the responsibility of a major economic province to really take the lead" and "adopt the attitude of "starting with a sprint, starting with a decisive battle", and doing a good job in task division, fund allocation, project promotion etc. and strive to achieve a good start in the first quarter. "It is necessary to conscientiously do a good job in various tasks at the beginning of the year and during the Spring Festival". It also asserted that "All comrades of the party group should conscientiously implement "one post, two responsibilities"."

ii) Nanfang Daily (January 11) disclosed that on January 11, the Guangdong Party Secretary Huang Kunming and Deputy Secretary of the Provincial Party Committee and Governor Wang Weizhong met Zheng Yanxiong, Director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, and his delegation in Guangzhou. They discussed deepening cooperation between Guangdong and Hong Kong and jointly promoting Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao. In-depth exchange of views on Bay Area construction.

CHINA-SHANXI: DATONG MUNICIPALITY OF SHANXI PROVINCE CELEBRATES FOURTH CHINESE PEOPLE'S POLICE DAY ON JANUARY 10

Shanxi Province's Datong News (January 11) reported that on January 10, the Datong Municipal Public Security Bureau held a grand special event to celebrate the Fourth Chinese People's Police Day with the theme of "Resolutely Fulfill the Original Aspiration and Work Hard to Strive for a New Journey" and with the honorary retirement of police officers and the oath of all police officers as the main content. At 8:30 a.m. that day, the conference hall on the

third floor of the Municipal Public Security Bureau was packed with more than 260 police representatives wearing police uniforms and in high spirits.

CHINA-WUHAN: WUHAN APPOINTS NEW DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SECURITY

The 14th meeting of the Standing Committee of the 15th Wuhan Municipal People's Congress on January 10, decided to appoint Dong Yuhua as the deputy mayor of the Wuhan Municipal People's Government and the Director of the Wuhan Municipal Public Security Bureau. Born in June 1970, he graduated from the People's Public Security University of China in 1992. In 2010, Dong Yuhua was transferred to the Hubei Provincial Public Security Department, and later served as deputy captain of the Hubei Provincial Public Security Department's Network Security Corps and director of the Science and Technology Information Division.

CHINA-TAIWAN: INVESTMENT BY TAIWANESE IN MAINLAND CHINESE ENTERPRISES HAS DROPPED TO A 30-YEAR LOW

A Deutsche Welles (January 5) report stated that investment in Chinese enterprises from people in Taiwan has hit a 30-year low. In fact, Taiwan's investment in the US & Germany in 2023 has exceeded investment in mainland China.

CHINA-BANGLADESH: CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING SENDS MESSAGE CONGRATULATING SHEIKH HASINA

The Beijing Daily (January 11) front paged a report that Chinese President Xi Jinping had sent a message congratulating Sheikh Hasina on her re-election.

CHINA-MALDIVES: MALDIVES PRESIDENT MUIZZU PAYS 5-DAY VISIT TO BEIJING AND MEETS CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING

China and Maldives signed 20 treaties and agreements during Maldives President Muizzu's 5-day (January 8-12) visit to Beijing. He also met Chinese President Xi Jinping on January 10. The two heads of state announced the elevation of bilateral ties to a comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership during the talks. Xi Jinping called on the two sides to strengthen cooperation in such areas as the economy, trade and investment, agricultural parks, and the

blue, green and digital economies. He also called for expanded cooperation on marine ecological and environmental protection, as well as strengthened people-to-people exchanges. He said China will support more Maldivian students to study in China and promote more direct flights between the two countries. Muizzu said he was honoured to pay his first state visit to China with a number of important cabinet ministers and become the first foreign head of state that China has hosted this year. The China Daily (January 11) observed that Xi Jinping had "rolled out the red carpet for Muizzu at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing with a welcoming ceremony that included a review of a guard of honour and a 21-gun salute". It said Xi Jinping had "underscored that China respects and supports the Maldives in exploring a development path that suits its national conditions, and firmly supports the Indian Ocean nation in safeguarding its national sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national dignity". The Global Times (January 11) quoted Zhao Gancheng, a research fellow at the Shanghai Institute for International Studies, as saying (January 10) that although Maldives is a small country in terms of land area and population, in terms of geopolitics, it has very high strategic significance. "The Indian Ocean is far from us, but it's extremely important to the economic and energy security of our country, as well as the BRI, so China needs to try its best to make friends in the region." It quoted Hu Zhiyong, a research fellow at the Institute of International Relations at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, as saying (January 11) that Muizzu's visit to China shows that Maldives sincerely wants to develop ties with China and strengthen existing cooperation. He said "Muizzu's pledge to the Maldivian people that there will be 'no foreign military presence,' makes India angry, so the newly elected president will surely hope China can help his country deal with the pressure from New Delhi." The Global Times added "China-Maldives relations do not target any third party, but due to India's aggressive stance against its neighbour, countries in the region will definitely want to diversify their ties to preserve their national dignity and sovereignty via cooperation with other major powers like China, said Chinese experts. This is why the normal development of ties between China and Maldives is making some India elites and decision-makers anxious, although it is unnecessary and exposes New Delhi's intention to suppress its neighbours, said analysts".

CHINA-US: PLA MAJOR GENERAL PUBLISHES ARTICLE IN BEIJING DAILY RECALLING CHINESE VICTORY IN THE KOREAN WAR ASSERTING IT AVE A LESSON TO THE U.S. NOT TO OFFEND THE CHINESE PEOPLE

The Beijing Daily (January 11) published a lengthy article titled 'Mao Zedong's strategic guidance in the great war to resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea' by Mao Xinyu, a professional and technical PLA Major General at the Academy of Military Sciences. The article stated "The use of superb war guidance art to defeat the superior and defeat powerful enemies is a fine tradition and military magic weapon forged by the Chinese Communist Party in its long-term war practice. At the beginning of the founding of New China, Mao Zedong and the leaders of the Party Central Committee made the historic decision to resist U.S. aggression, aid Korea, and defend the country." Recalling Mao's strategy, it said "We must persist in using local wars to prevent larger-scale aggressive wars". It said, "By giving a severe lesson to the "United Nations Army" led by the US military, they have a deep understanding that it is "difficult to offend the Chinese people". This is truly the goal of ending war with war was achieved." The article also said: "Persist in counterattack operations from external lines to achieve strategic defense objectives. From a practical point of view, most of the several border self-defense counterattacks conducted after the founding of the People's Republic of China insisted that the enemy could come, and we could go. After the enemy launched a military invasion against us and we obtained the power of self-defense counterattack, we adopted external counterattacks to defeat the enemy." In conclusion the article said: "Mao Zedong's experience and practice in carrying out people's war has profoundly inspired us: Although there are many ways to win modern war, the most fundamental thing is to rely closely on the people and maximize the advantages of the country's total war. At present, conflicts among major powers are very intense, and the risk of war is on the rise. We must hold high the banner of just war, adhere to the integration of military struggle with political, economic, and diplomatic struggles, and strive to consolidate and improve the integrated national strategic system and capabilities."

CHINA-US: CCP CC ILD CHIEF LIU JIANCHAO VISITS U.S.

Liu Jianchao's, Head of the CCP CC's International Liaison Department, spoke at the Council on Foreign Relations on January 9, 2024, where he reportedly "dazzled, enlightened, and entertained, with audience members laughing along with his answers on Xi Jinping's promise to return pandas to the U.S." He also met UN Secretary-General António Guterres

CHINA-US: CHINA AND U.S. HOLD 2-DAY DEFENCE POLICY COORDINATION TALKS IN WASHINGTON

The China Daily (January 11) reported, after the 2-day 17th defense policy coordination talks between China and the US co-chaired by an official from the Central Military Commission's International Cooperation Office and US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Michael Chase, which were held in Washington earlier this week, that China is willing to develop healthy and stable military-to-military relations with the United States on the basis of equality and respect, and jointly implement the military-related consensus reached by the two heads of state during their meeting in San Francisco in November. Noting that this was the first such meeting since Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan, it added that it comes as China and the US are resuming military communication at various levels. It said China reiterated its position on the Taiwan question and the South China Sea issue adding that 'the country will never compromise on the Taiwan question and called on the US side to abide by the one-China principle, implement its relevant commitments, stop arming Taiwan and oppose "Taiwan independence"'. It said 'China also urged the US to reduce its military deployment and provocative actions in the South China Sea and stop providing support to certain countries that have infringed on China's territorial integrity and caused provocations. The US should fully recognize the root causes of maritime and air security risks, strictly restrain its front-line troops and stop hyping up problems'.

CHINA-A.I.: CHINESE AND U.S. HI-TECH COMPANIES HOLD BACK-CHANNEL TALKS IN GENEVA

The Financial Times (January 11) reported that Open AI, Anthropic and Cohere held back-channel talks in Geneva with Chinese state-backed companies. It said, "Those involved in the talks said Chinese AI companies such as ByteDance, Tencent and Baidu did not participate; while Google DeepMind was briefed of the details of the discussions, it did not attend".