



CCAS CHINA NEWS
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CHINA-LEADERSHIP: CHINESE PREMIER LI QIANG INSPECTS HI-TECH INDUSTRIES IN BEIJING ON MARCH 13

CCTV (March 13) telecast a report that Premier Li Qiang visited Beijing on March 13, where he "emphasized the need to thoroughly study and implement the spirit of General Secretary Xi Jinping's important speech during the two sessions of the country, conscientiously implement the tasks specified by the two sessions, firmly grasp the new round of scientific and technological revolution and industrial transformation trends, and promote the deep integration of scientific and technological innovation and industrial innovation". It said Li Qiang inspected the Innovation Operation Center of the Beijing High-Level Autonomous Driving Demonstration Zone to inspect the cloud control basic platform system and vehicle-road collaboration sand table demonstration; Baidu's Yizhuang office area to learn about the development and application of large-scale model products and the construction of a localized artificial intelligence innovation consortium; the Northern Huachuang Technology Group Co., Ltd., to be briefed on the company's integrated circuit equipment research and development and industrialization situation; and the Beijing Zhiyuan Artificial Intelligence Research Institute, to study the research and development of large-scale cutting-edge technologies and inspected the display of artificial intelligence products. Chinese Premier Li Qiang also held a symposium on the development of new productive forces in Beijing and heard speeches from relevant enterprise leaders. Li Qiang pointed out that developing new productive forces is an intrinsic requirement and an important focus to promote high-quality development. Li Qiang pointed out that artificial intelligence is an important engine for the development of new productivity. He hoped that Beijing will give full play to its advantages, take the lead in developing new productive forces, and serve as a demonstration and driving role. Beijing Party Secretary Yin Li and State Councilor Wu Zhenglong accompanied Li Qiang.

CHINA-LEADERSHIP: PEOPLE'S DAILY PUBLISHES PROFILE ON 'XI JINPING THE REFORMER'

The People's Daily (March 13) published a 'Profile: Xi Jinping the Reformer'. It highlighted that 'reform will not stop, opening-up will not cease'.

CHINA-LEADERSHIP: FIRST TWO VOLUMES OF 'SELECTED READINGS FROM THE WORKS OF XI JINPING' PUBLISHED BY FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS

The People's Daily (March 12) publicised that an English edition of the first two volumes of "Selected Readings from the Works of Xi Jinping" has been published by the Foreign Languages Press and distributed both at home and abroad. The first two volumes of the book series contain Xi's important works from November 2012 to October 2022. Xinhua (March 12) said the English edition is helpful for foreign readers to understand Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era and will help the international community better understand Chinese modernization and modern civilization of the Chinese nation.

CHINA-NPC: NPC SESSION CONCLUDES ON MARCH 11 --- SOME HIGHLIGHTS

The second session of China's 14th NPC concluded on March 11 and, for the first time in decades, the Chinese Premier did not host a press conference. Chinese President Xi Jinping, who usually speaks only at the closing ceremonies of the first session of each National People's Congress, also did not speak at the closing ceremony. The closing meeting was chaired by NPC Chairman Zhao Leji, Executive Chairman and Executive Chairman of the Presidium of the Conference. Chinese President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Qiang and Politburo Standing Committee members Wang Huning, Cai Qi, Ding Xuexiang, Li Xi, Han Zheng and members of the presidium of the conference took their seats on the rostrum. Li Hongzhong, Wang Dongming, Xiao Jie, Zheng Jianbang, Ding Zhongli, Hao Mingjin, Cai Dafeng, He Wei, Wu Weihua, Tiening, Peng Qinghua, Zhang Qingwei, Luosang Jiangcun, Xue Keleti Zakir, Chairman Liu Qizai were present. Zhao Leji said there should be 2956 representatives present at the meeting, 2900 were present and 56 were absent. The number of people present complied with the quorum.

Also sitting on the rostrum were: Ma Xingrui, Wang Yi, Yin Li, Shi Taifeng, Liu Guozhong, Li Ganjie, Li Shulei, He Weidong, He Lifeng, Zhang Youxia, Zhang Guoqing, Chen Wenqing, Chen Jining, Chen Min'er, Yuan Jiajun, Huang Kunming, Liu Jinguo, Wang Xiaohong, Wu Zhenglong, Chen Yiqin, Zhang Jun, Ying Yong, Hu Chunhua, Shen Yueyue, Wang Yong, Pabala Glenelg, Ho Hau Wah, Leung Chun-ying, Battelle, Su Hui, Shao Hong, Chen Wu, Mu Hong, Xian Hui, Wang Dongfeng, Jiang Xinzhi, Jiang Zuojun, He Baoxiang, Wang Guangqian, Qin Boyong, Zhu Yongxin, Yang Zhen, and members of the Central Military Commission Liu Zhenli, Miao Hua, Zhang Shengmin, etc.

Relevant responsible persons from relevant departments of the central and state agencies, relevant units of the People's Liberation Army and the Armed Police Force, and various people's organizations attended or observed the conference. Foreign envoys stationed in China attended the conference.

ii) Some highlights of the Government Work Report (GWR) are: it explicitly pledged to lower energy consumption per unit of GDP by around -2.5% in 2024; China has set a 2024 growth target of around 5%. A top Chinese economic planner noted how the push to upgrade equipment would generate a market of more than 5 trillion yuan (about \$694.5 billion).; Real estate received less emphasis with the Minister of Housing and Urban-Rural Development saying property developers “that must go bankrupt should go bankrupt.” In a press conference on March 9, Housing Minister Ni Hong warned that those who “harm the interests of the masses” will be probed and punished.; The Chinese Communist Party has increased its oversight of the government under Xi Jinping. At the ceremonial closing on March 11, the National People’s Congress, voted 2883 to 8, with 9 abstentions, to revise the State Council Organic Law [国务院组织法]—the first update of the statute since its enactment in December 1982. The changes include Vice Premiers and the head of the People’s Bank of China among the council’s top leadership group.

(Comment: Article 5 clarifies that the Vice Premiers and State Councillors are assigned to oversee specific issue areas. It also explicitly includes the Governor of the People’s Bank of China (PBOC) among the constituent members of the State Council.)

CHINA-CPPCC: CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING ATTENDS CLOSING SESSION OF CPPCC IN BEIJING ON MARCH 10

CCTV (March 10) announced that the second meeting of the 14th National Committee of the CPPCC completed all agendas and closed at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 10. The meeting called on all participating units of the CPPCC, organizations at all levels, and CPPCC members "to unite more closely around the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China with Comrade Xi Jinping as the core, work together with one heart and one mind, and work together to create a new situation for the work of the CPPCC in the new era". The meeting was chaired by Wang Huning, CPPCC, CPPCC Vice Chairman Shi Taifeng, Hu Chunhua, Shen Yueyue, Wang Yong, Zhou Qiang, Pabala Glenje, Ho Hau Wah, Leung Chun-ying, Battelle, Su Hui, Shao Hong, Gao Yunlong, Chen Wu, Mu Hong, Xian Hui, Wang Dongfeng, Jiang Xinzhi, Jiang Zuojun, He Baoxiang, Wang Guangqian, Qin Boyong, Zhu Yongxin and Yang Zhen seated in the front row of the rostrum. Chinese President Xi Jinping, Chinese Premier Li Qiang and PBSC members Zhao Leji, Cai Qi, Ding Xuexiang, Li Xi, Han Zheng and others were seated on the rostrum. Wang Huning announced that 2,162 members should have attended the second meeting of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, but 2,085 actually attended.

CHINA-SECURITY: DRIVER OF BLACK SEDAN DRAGGED OUT OF CAR BY SECURITY PERSONNEL OUTSIDE ZHONGNANHAI AND TAKEN AWAY

Early morning on March 10 a black sedan was seen stopped right outside Xinhua (新华门), the entrance to Zhongnanhai, and someone — most likely the driver — was dragged from the vehicle and carried away — spread-eagled — from the scene by a squad of policemen in the wee hour. A passer-by videographed the incident. No further details are available yet.

CHINA-SECURITY: CHINA'S MINISTRY OF STATE SECURITY STRESSED FOOD SECURITY IN A RECENT ARTICLE

Citing a proverb, China's Ministry of State Security (MoSS) stressed food security in its latest article published on its official WeChat account on March 11. It said China has struck hard to cut off the "black hands" from overseas targeting the country's germplasm resources. The

article said food security is an important component of national security, closely related to the overall well-being of the country. It said national security agencies are resolutely implementing the overall national security concept and actively safeguarding national food security in collaboration with relevant departments. The MoSS claimed that in recent years, national security agencies have cracked down various espionage activities related to food security, cutting off the "black hands" of foreign espionage targeting China's germplasm resources, preventing and addressing the risks of food security leaks, and ensuring the smooth implementation of the national food security strategy.

(Comment: The MoSS has in recent months apparently enlarged its remit to include financial matters and now agriculture and food security.)

CHINA-CCP: CEREMONY COMMEMORATING SUN YAT-SEN HELD IN BEIJING'S ZHONGSHAN PARK ON MARCH 12

People's Daily (March 13) reported that a ceremony commemorating renowned Chinese revolutionary and statesman Sun Yat-sen was held on March 12 in Beijing's Zhongshan Park. It said floral baskets from the CPPCC, the Chinese Kuomintang (RCKK) Central Committee, the CCP CC UFWD, the Beijing municipal government, and the Beijing municipal committee of the RCKK were presented to the statue by representatives.

CHINA-CCP: PARTY COMMITTEE OF FOREIGN MINISTRY PUBLISHES ARTICLE IN PEOPLE'S DAILY EMPHASISING PARTY'S LEADERSHIP

The People's Daily (March 13) published an article by the Party Committee of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the caption 'Scientific guidance for China's diplomacy in the new journey (in-depth study and implementation of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era)' which said, "the Central Foreign Affairs Work Conference held in December 2023 is an important meeting held in the context that the world has entered a new period of turbulence and change and the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation has entered a critical period". It added "The meeting formed the top-level design of China's diplomatic strategy on the new journey and achieved new and rich development of Xi Jinping's diplomatic thoughts. We must adhere to the guidance of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, thoroughly study and understand the theoretical innovations of

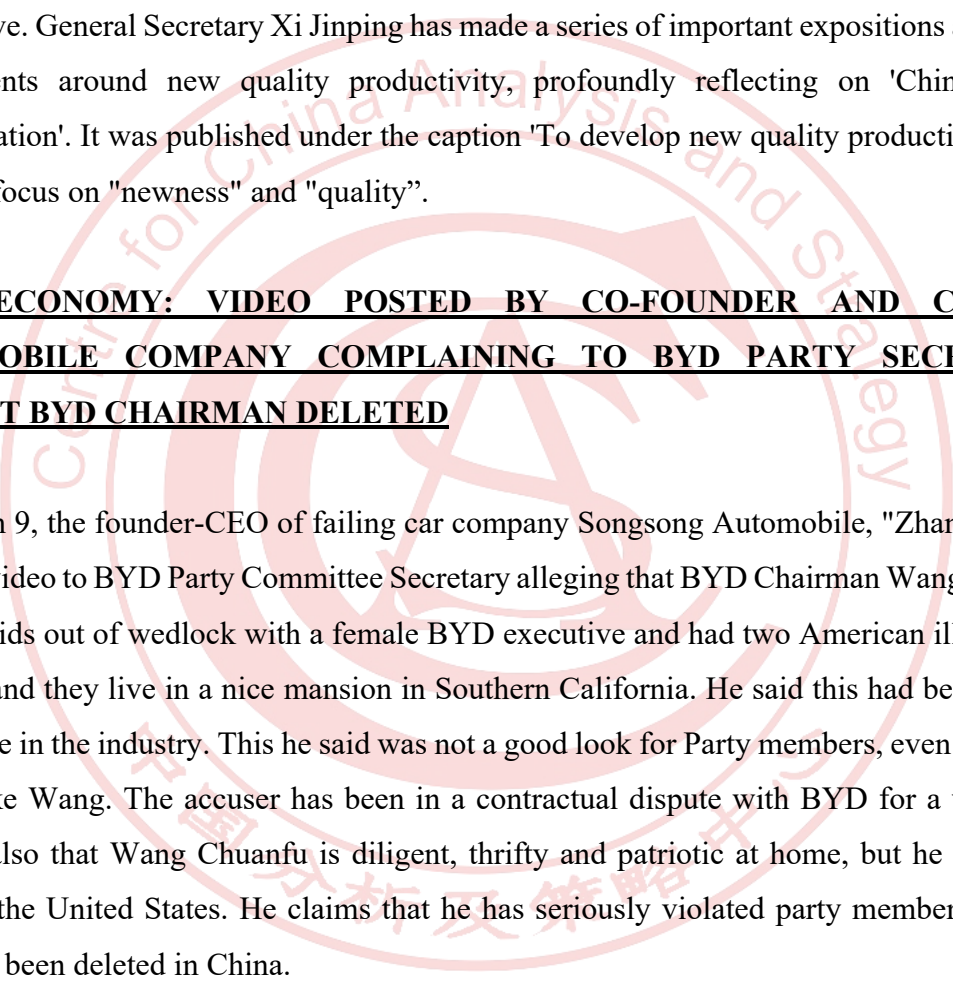
Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy, fully implement the spirit of the Central Foreign Affairs Work Conference, and gather great strength for the new journey of China's diplomacy in the new era. Deeply understand that the key to conducting major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics lies in the leadership of the Party." The article stressed "The Party's leadership is the most essential feature of socialism with Chinese characteristics, the greatest advantage of the socialist system with Chinese characteristics, and the most fundamental principle and greatest confidence in China's diplomacy. The Central Foreign Affairs Work Conference emphasized that we must unswervingly insist that diplomatic power lies with the Party Central Committee, consciously adhere to the centralized and unified leadership of the Party Central Committee, and further strengthen the system and mechanism of the Party's leadership in external work. Diplomacy is an extension of domestic affairs and a concentrated expression of the country's will".

CHINA-CCP: STUDY TIMES ARTICLE EMPHASISES IMPORTANCE OF IMPROVING AGRICULTURE, RURAL AREAS AND FARMERS

Study Times, the journal of the Central Party School, published (March 11) an article captioned 'Promote the modernization of rural governance systems and governance capabilities' by Li Jianwei, Research fellow and Vice Director-General, Research Department of Social Development, Development Research Center of the State Council (DRC), and Wang Weijin. It said CCP CC General Secretary "Xi Jinping attaches great importance to the work of "agriculture, rural areas and farmers" and emphasises the need to improve the level of rural industry development, rural construction, and rural governance, strengthen measures to increase farmers' income, and promote the comprehensive revitalization of rural areas to continuously achieve substantial progress and phased results. Rural governance is an important part of national governance and also a weak link in current national governance. To improve the level of rural governance, we must focus on solving the two problems between urban and rural areas".

(Comment: Wang Weijin might be the Deputy Director of the Sichuan province's Department of Commerce.)

CHINA-CCP: STUDY TIMES INTERVIEWS NPC DEPUTY AND PRESIDENT OF HARBIN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY HAN JIECAI TO UNDERSTAND 'NEW QUALITY PRODUCTIVITY'

In an interview with Study Times (March 11), a journal of the Central Party School, Academician Han Jiecai, Deputy to the National People's Congress and President of Harbin Institute of Technology, explained Xi Jinping's term "new quality productivity" as: the proposal of "new qualitative productivity" provides us with new ideological weapons from a theoretical perspective. General Secretary Xi Jinping has made a series of important expositions and major deployments around new quality productivity, profoundly reflecting on 'Chinese style modernisation'. It was published under the caption 'To develop new quality productive forces, we must focus on "newness" and "quality"'.


CHINA-ECONOMY: VIDEO POSTED BY CO-FOUNDER AND CEO OF AUTOMOBILE COMPANY COMPLAINING TO BYD PARTY SECRETARY AGAINST BYD CHAIRMAN DELETED

On March 9, the founder-CEO of failing car company Songsong Automobile, "Zhang Xiaolei posted a video to BYD Party Committee Secretary alleging that BYD Chairman Wang Chuanfu has two kids out of wedlock with a female BYD executive and had two American illegitimate children and they live in a nice mansion in Southern California. He said this had been known for a while in the industry. This he said was not a good look for Party members, even industrial heroes like Wang. The accuser has been in a contractual dispute with BYD for a while. He claimed also that Wang Chuanfu is diligent, thrifty and patriotic at home, but he has many assets in the United States. He claims that he has seriously violated party membership. The video has been deleted in China.

CHINA-ECONOMY: ONGOING NPC SESSION INTENDS TO ENACT LAW TO SUPPORT PRIVATE ECONOMY

Caixin (March 8) reported that the NPC is set to come up with a law specifically designed to prop up the private economy as part of its plans this year. The NPC work report said NPC Deputies this year also seek to create legislation on value-added tax, preschool education, social assistance and more. The 2024 legislative plan also includes revising a number of existing laws,

including the Enterprise Bankruptcy Law, the Anti-Unfair Competition Law, as well as laws on the protection of cultural relics and cybersecurity.

CHINA-ECONOMY: CHINA'S LARGEST DEVELOPER VANKE CO. LTD SEEKING EXTENSION TO US\$ 65 MILLION DEBT

China's prolonged property slump and continuing squeeze on developers' finances have led to renewed pressure on state-backed China Vanke Co. Ltd., one of the country's most financially robust home builders. The Shenzhen-based developer is trying to extend around 5 billion yuan (US\$ 695 million) of privately issued debt owed to two state-backed insurance sector companies that had already been extended once, sources with knowledge of the matter told Caixin. The liabilities were originally due for repayment on December 11 and in January, respectively, but were extended by three months after talks with creditors and help from regulators, they said. The extensions are about to expire and Vanke is again seeking to postpone the repayments.

CHINA-S&T: HEAD OF SHENZHEN-BASED CHINA ELECTRONICS CORPORATION SAYS AT NPC THAT CHINA HAS "LONG WAY" TO GO TO CATCH UP WITH U.S.

During a sideline meeting on March 5, in Beijing at the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) – the country's top political advisory body – Zeng Yi, a delegate who heads the Shenzhen-based China Electronics Corporation, said his firm has a "long way" to go to catch up with the United States. Zeng Yi told a gathering of a few dozen representatives of the science and technology community: "Objectively speaking, despite the great efforts we have been making, our difference [with the US] is still huge."

CHINA-S&T: CHINA TO RAISE US\$ 27 BILLION FOR CHIP FUND

Bloomberg (March 8) said China's National Integrated Circuit Industry Investment Fund is amassing a pool of capital from local governments and state enterprises for its third vehicle that should exceed the 200 billion yuan (US\$ 27 Billion) of its second fund. Known as the Big Fund, the state-backed firm is expanding its remit just as the US prepares to sharply escalate technology curbs designed to curtail Chinese chip and artificial intelligence progress. It said

the establishment of a much larger third fund — directly overseen by China's powerful tech ministry — signals a resurgent effort to harness the world's largest semiconductor market after years of mixed success. Huawei Technologies Co. and its partner Semiconductor Manufacturing International Corp. still had to rely on US-origin technology to build an advanced processor last year.

CHINA-PLA: CMC GENERAL OFFICE ISSUES DIRECTIVE REQUIRING PLA AND PAP TO CONSCIENTIOUSLY STUDY "SPIRIT" OF NPC AND XI JINPING'S SPEECH FOCUSING ON IMPROVING STRATEGIC CAPABILITIES

Xinhua (March 13) reported that the CMC General Office recently issued a notice requiring the PLA and PAP "to conscientiously convey and study the spirit of the Second Session of the 14th National People's Congress, and conscientiously study and implement President Xi's speech at the plenary meeting of the People's Liberation Army and Armed Police Force delegation". The notice pointed out that "President Xi's important speech at the plenary meeting of the People's Liberation Army and Armed Police Force delegation focused on the requirements for comprehensively improving strategic capabilities in emerging fields. We must conscientiously study and implement the spirit of the conference, highlight the spirit of President Xi's important speeches, and fully understand that the major achievements made in the construction of the party, the country, and the army over the past year fundamentally lie in President Xi's leadership and helm, and in Xi Jinping's socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era. Guided by scientific thinking, we must more deeply understand the decisive significance of the "two establishments", strengthen the "four consciousnesses", strengthen the "four self-confidences", achieve "two maintenances", implement the Chairman's responsibility system of the Military Commission; fully understand this year's economic and social The overall requirements, expected goals, policy orientations and work tasks of development will enhance the confidence and belief in comprehensively promoting the construction of a strong country and the great cause of national rejuvenation with Chinese-style modernization.

CHINA-PLA: CMC VICE CHAIRMAN HE WEIDONG VOWS TO CRACK DOWN ON "FAKE COMBAT CAPABILITIES"

The South China Morning Post (March 9) disclosed that according to minutes from the meeting made available to media during a discussion with a People's Liberation Army delegation in

Beijing on March 5, CMC Vice Chairman General He Weidong vowed to crack down on what he called “fake combat capabilities” in the military. Unnamed experts were quoted saying it was likely related to weapons procurement – the focus of corruption investigations.

CHINA-PLA: FORMER PLARF POLITICAL COMMISSAR XU ZHONGBO ATTENDED THE PLENARY MEETING OF THE PLA AND PAP AT SECOND SESSION OF 14th NPC

Chinese President Xi Jinping attended the Plenary meeting of the PLA and Armed Police Force (PAP) delegation at the second session of the 14th National People’s Congress, chaired by CMC Vice Chairman, Zhang Youxia. Representatives from various departments and branches of the armed forces made speeches as Xi Jinping listened and occasionally interacted with representatives. Xi Jinping delivered a speech on strategic capacity building and coordinated maritime military struggles. All members of the Central Military Commission except Miao Hua were present at the plenary session. Interestingly, the PLA and PAP delegation included former PLARF Political Commissar, Xu Zhongbo, who disappeared from public view in July 2023. This is his first public appearance since he was dismissed.

CHINA-PLA: PLA SPOKESMAN CLARIFIES EMPHASIS WILL BE ON IMPROVING STRATEGIC CAPACITY TO DEFEND NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY BUT PLA WILL BE FRUGAL

In a statement issued on March 9, during the annual session of the National People’s Congress (NPC), PLA delegation spokesman Sr Colonel Wu Qian was quoted as saying that the goal was to “comprehensively improve strategic capacity to defend national sovereignty, security and development interests”. “The instability and uncertainty of the security situation we face have increased, and the task of the military struggle is arduous and burdensome.” Wu Qian added that international military conflicts had erupted and China’s domestic anti-separatist struggle was “complex and grim”. China will direct much of its growing defence budget to combat readiness as challenges persist at home and abroad, according to the country’s military. Wu Qian said “The PLA will keep in mind the idea of living with a tight budget, strengthen the concept of high efficiency and low consumption, and adhere to the principle of doing everything diligently and frugal.” Wu Qian said China’s spending was “transparent, reasonable and appropriate”, and “relatively low” compared to the United States in terms of its proportion

of GDP and overall government spending, as well as military spending per capita or spending per military personnel. Another beneficiary of the increased spending would be global peace, he said, with Chinese personnel taking part in international missions such as peacekeeping, naval escorts and humanitarian rescues. Wu Qian condemned US arms sales to Taiwan and repeated Beijing's opposition to "external interference" by Washington. Conveying a warning to Taiwan President-elect Lai Ching-te, Senior Colonel Wu Qian said "We are willing to work with the utmost sincerity and endeavour for the prospect of peaceful reunification, but we the PLA will never give the slightest room for separatist acts of 'Taiwan independence.'" "The PLA will continue to strengthen its training and preparation for war and resolutely fight independence and promote unification."

(Comment: Presenting the Government Work Report to the NPC on March 5, Chinese Premier Li Qiang said military spending would grow by 7.2 per cent to 1.69 trillion yuan (US\$235 billion), the same rate of increase as last year but higher than the country's economic growth target for this year of 5 per cent.)

CHINA-PLA: CHINESE MILITARY EXPERT COMMENTS ON CMC VICE CHAIRMAN HE WEIDONG'S COMMENTS ON "FAKE COMBAT CAPABILITIES"

The South China Morning Post (March 9) quoted Chinese former PLA officer and military equipment expert Fu Qianshao, as saying "Fake combat capabilities" could also refer to "fake" drills that do not reach the standards required, such as "night exercises" being conducted around sunset – something military mouthpiece PLA Daily has reported on in recent years. The PLA is meanwhile under pressure from Beijing to boost combat readiness, with President Xi Jinping calling for the military to step up "real combat" exercises and training to prepare for "stormy seas" ahead at a time when geopolitical tensions are rising and rivalry with the US is heating up. Fu Qianshao said General He Weidong's comments also hinted at the problems with training, and that it "should be conducted according to the actual combat requirements – it must not become a show".

CHINA-PLA: CMC'S EQUIPMENT DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT REVOKES CHINESE COMPANY'S TENDERING QUALIFICATION FOR MILITARY EQUIPMENT

The CMC's Equipment Development Department announced on March 12 that during an investigation, China Far East International Tendering Company, a branch under the China Far East International Trading Corporation, was found to have violated regulations and improperly forwarded a large amount of procurement announcement materials through WeChat and internet emails, and stored a large quantity of classified documents on non-confidential computers. Its tendering qualification had, therefore, been revoked.

CHINA-PLA: SIPRI REPORT SAYS CHINA'S MILITARY ARMS IMPORTS FROM RUSSIA FELL 44 PERCENT IN PREVIOUS 5 YEARS BUT RUSSIA STILL SUPPLIES 77 PERCENT OF CHINA'S PURCHASES

A report (March 11) by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) said China nearly halved its arms imports over the past five years as it replaced foreign weapons with its own technology, but Russia still accounted for the bulk of Beijing's overseas purchases. It said China's arms imports in 2019-23 fell by 44 per cent from the previous five years, putting it 10th on the list of the world's biggest buyers of foreign weapons. Russia supplied 77 per cent of China's purchases, including aircraft engines and helicopter systems, followed by France with 13 per cent. Despite the war with Russia, Ukraine remained the third-largest source of China's imports with 8.2 per cent, supplying gas turbines for destroyers and engines for China's L-15 trainer/light combat aircraft. SIPRI did not say how China's imports from Russia and Ukraine changed after the Russian invasion in early 2022. The report said the rapid drop in Chinese imports overall was because of Beijing's "growing ability to design and produce its own major arms" and would probably "decrease further as it develops this capacity". Wezeman said China had localised several systems in the past few years, such as engines for combat and transport aircraft that it imported from Russia and marine engines from Ukraine, France and Germany. He said that by the end of last year, new versions of aircraft and ships with Chinese engines came into production, with no need for foreign supplies. "Helicopters are probably the last bulwark of difficulty. Helicopters are incredibly difficult to produce ... China has a long-term problem with that. That's why they kept producing under-licensed French helicopters and kept importing Russian helicopters," he said. "But also China has shown that

it can now produce engines, rotors, and transmission systems. There are still Russian helicopters being imported, but in very limited numbers, and new Chinese designs are coming up and probably taking over in the coming years.”

In arms exports, China sold weapons to 40 states, ranking fourth in global share on a steady 5.8 per cent although export volumes were down by 5.3 per cent. Pakistan took 61 per cent of China’s arms exports, followed by Bangladesh with 11 per cent and Thailand 6 per cent. China took 21 per cent of Russian exports after India, which had 34 per cent.

CHINA-PLA: PLAAF DEPUTY COMMANDER WANG WEI SAYS H-20 TO BE UNVEILED TO PUBLIC SOON

PLAAF Deputy Commander Wang Wei, who is also a member of the CPPCC, told the Global Times (March 10) that the H-20, China's new long-range bomber project, faces no technical difficulties in development and will be unveiled to the public soon. He said that the commissioning of the H-20 will significantly enhance the PLA Air Force's capabilities. Analysts said when commissioned, the H-20 will become a new quality combat force, serve as a powerful strategic deterrent and contribute to the safeguard of national sovereignty, security and development interests, as well as peace and stability in the region and around the world.

CHINA-PLA: PLA EASTERN THEATRE COMMAND AIR FORCE AVIATION BRIGADE BEGINS NIGHT COMBAT TRAINING

The Global Times (March 10) reported that the PLA Eastern Theater Command Air Force aviation brigade began night combat training, focusing on real combat scenarios, mastering all-weather skills, and enhancing combat readiness.

CHINA-GUANGDONG: GUANGDONG PARTY SECRETARY AND POLITBURO MEMBER HUANG KUNMING CONVENES ENLARGED MEETING OF PROVINCIAL PARTY COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS NPC AND XI JINPING'S IMPORTANT SPEECHES

Guangzhou Daily (March 12) disclosed that Guangdong Party Secretary and Politburo member Huang Kunming held an enlarged meeting on March 12, "to earnestly convey and study General Secretary Xi Jinping's important speech at the National Two Sessions and the spirit of the National Two Sessions" etc. Huang Kunming presided over the meeting and delivered a speech. The meeting also conveyed and studied the newly revised "Regulations on Inspection Work of the Communist Party of China", listened to the report on the provincial party committee's inspection work in 2023, and studied and deployed the next step of work.

ii) The Yangcheng Evening News (March 12) announced that on March 11, the Guangzhou Municipal Human Resources and Social Security Bureau said that more than 350 employment stations covering urban and rural areas will be built in the city in 2024 to further improve service measures and expand service supply. , to promote the convenience, precision and diversification of grassroots employment services.

CHINA-SICHUAN: SICHUAN PROVINCE PARTY COMMITTEE HOLDS ENLARGED MEETING

The Sichuan Daily (March 13) reported that the Standing Committee of the Sichuan Provincial Party Committee held an enlarged meeting on March 13 to convey and study the spirit of the National Two Sessions and study the implementation opinions of the province. Provincial Party Committee Secretary Wang Xiaohui presided over the meeting and delivered a speech.

CHINA-LIAONING: LIAONING PARTY SECRETARY CONVENES PROVINCIAL PARTY MEETING ON MARCH 12 TO IMPLEMENT 'SPIRIT' OF NPC

Liaoning Province Party Secretary Hao Peng convened a provincial party conference in Shenyang on March 12 "to convey and implement the spirit of the National Two Sessions" and delivered a speech. Deputy Secretary of the Provincial Party Committee and Governor Li

Lecheng presided over the meeting and conveyed General Secretary Xi Jinping's remarks on the Jiangsu delegation's deliberation at the second session of the 14th National People's Congress and the joint meeting of members of the Kuomintang Revolutionary Committee. The meeting was held in the form of a video and telephone conference, with branch venues set up in each city and Shenfu Demonstration Zone.

CHINA-HAINAN: LI AIHUA APPOINTED SECRETARY OF DONGFANG MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE AND DEPUTY MAYOR

"Hainan News Broadcast" on March 11, said that the CCP Hainan Provincial Committee recently decided that 1975-born Li Aihua will be appointed as Standing Committee Member and Secretary (deputy department level) of the CCP Dongfang Municipal Committee and Deputy Mayor. Li Aihua worked in Jiangsu for a long time and was transferred to Hainan in 2021.

CHINA-HUBEI: LIU ZHITIAN APPOINTED SECRETARY OF HUBEI PROVINCIAL COMMITTEE OF CYL

The "Hubei Communist Youth League" website (March 11) disclosed that Liu Zhitian, Secretary of the Provincial Committee of the Communist Youth League, presided over a collective study session of the theoretical study center group of the leadership team on March 7.

(Comment: Liu Zhitian, Han nationality, was born in April 1981, and is a Doctor of Engineering, and a member of the CCP. Liu Zhitian worked in universities in his early days. He served as Party Committee Secretary and Dean of the School of Materials Science and Engineering of Wuhan Engineering University, Dean of the Science and Technology Development Institute of Wuhan Engineering University, and later served as a member of the Party Group and Deputy Director of the Hubei Provincial Department of Science and Technology.)

CHINA-TAIWAN: FINAL VERSION OF GOVERNMENT WORK REPORT APPROVED BY NPC DOES NOT MENTION "PEACEFUL REUNIFICATION"

China released the final, full text of the Government Work Report on March 13. The portion on Taiwan said:

"We will implement our Party's overall policy for the new era on resolving the Taiwan question, stay committed to the one-China principle and the 1992 Consensus, and resolutely oppose separatist activities aimed at "Taiwan independence" and external interference.

We will promote the peaceful development of cross-Strait relations, be firm in advancing the cause of China's reunification, and uphold the fundamental interests of the Chinese nation. By advancing integrated cross-Strait development, we will improve the wellbeing of Chinese people on both sides so that together, we can realize the glorious cause of national rejuvenation."

(Comment: The revised final version did not mention "peaceful reunification" but in a tougher tone said, "We will implement our Party's overall policy for the new era on resolving the Taiwan question".)

CHINA-TAIWAN: TAIWAN AFFAIRS OFFICE SPOKESMAN CALLS DPP AUTHORITIES "HEARTLESS" FOR EVADING RESPONSIBILITIES ON MAINLAND FISHING BOAT INCIDENT OF LAST MONTH

Speaking at a press conference on March 13, the People's Daily (March 13) quoted Chen Binhua, spokesperson for the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, commenting on the incident of February 14 when the Taiwan side's brutal expulsion of a mainland fishing boat resulted in injuries and deaths of the fishermen aboard. He blamed Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) authorities for evading their responsibilities in the handling of a fatal boat incident and said up till now, the families of the fishermen have not received a single apology or any truth, while the Taiwan authorities have been delaying the resolution of the incident under the pretext of "investigation procedures." He said "The Taiwan authorities are indeed heartless, unrighteous and unreasonable".

ii) The Economic Daily (March 13) also accused the DPP authorities have so far not lifted the prohibition and restrictions on mainland Chinese people's exchanges with Taiwan. The very

few exchanges that go to Taiwan must go through Taiwan's so-called "special application." The Democratic Progressive Party authorities have not yet lifted the ban on Taiwanese people coming to the mainland for group tours. They have also adopted various overt or covert means to suppress and intimidate Taiwanese people from participating in cross-strait exchanges,

CHINA-INDIA: CHINA LODGES PROTEST AFTER PRIME MINISTER MODI'S VISIT TO ARUNACHAL PRADESH AND UNVEILING OF SELA TUNNEL

South China Morning Post (March 12) reported that Beijing lodged a diplomatic protest with New Delhi after Prime Minister Narendra Modi officially opened a tunnel built in territories along the two countries' disputed Himalayan border, weeks ahead of general elections in the South Asian state. It said Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said on March 12 that India had "no right to arbitrarily develop the area of Zangnan in China". The move "will only complicate" the boundary question and "disrupt the situation" in the border areas. "The area of Zangnan is Chinese territory. The Chinese government has never recognised the so-called Arunachal Pradesh, illegally set up by India and firmly opposes it." Wang Wenbin said "solemn representations" had been made. "China strongly deplores and firmly opposes the Indian leader's visit to the east section of the China- India boundary," adding that the border question has "yet to be solved". The newspaper recalled that Modi refused to support Beijing's landmark Belt and Road Initiative at the virtual Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit in July.

(Comment: The tunnel, built at an altitude of 13,000 feet (3,960 metres), will facilitate India's movement of troops and weaponry to forward locations.)

CHINA-INDIA: CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON SAYS INDIA'S DEPLOYMENT OF ADDITIONAL TROOPS ON BORDER DOES NOT EASE THE SITUATION

Reacting to reports of India deploying an additional 9000 troops along the borders with China, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said at a regular press briefing in Beijing on March 8 that "India enhancing military deployments in the India-China border areas does not help ease the situation in the border areas or in safeguarding tranquillity and safety." She added that

“China is committed to working with India to safeguard the tranquillity and stability of the border areas.”

CHINA-INDIA: CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN REACTS TO EAM JAISHANKAR'S REMARKS AT EXPRESS ADDA

Xinhua (March 13) quoted Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin's response to External Affairs Minister Jaishankar's remarks at the Express Adda that an early settlement of the situation on the China-India border serves the common interests of China and India, adding that it is hoped that the two countries will find a solution to relevant border issues that can be accepted by both sides at an early date. He said both China and India believe that an early settlement of the situation on the China-India border serves the common interests of both countries. China hopes that the two sides will follow the common understandings between the leaders of the two countries and the spirit of relevant agreements, maintain communication through diplomatic and military channels, and find a solution to relevant border issues that can be accepted by both sides at an early date. China has stressed multiple times that the boundary question does not represent the entirety of China-India relations, and it should be placed appropriately in the bilateral relations and managed properly. China hopes India will work in the same direction with China, approach the bilateral relations from a strategic height and long-term perspective, Wang said. The two sides should enhance mutual trust and avoid misunderstanding and misjudgement, step up dialogue and cooperation and avoid setting up obstacles, handle differences properly and avoid creating disputes. "In this way, we will bring the bilateral relations to a sound and steady track of development."

(Comments: Wang Wenbin's remarks indicate no change in China's position that 'that the boundary question does not represent the entirety of China-India relations'. It suggests that China will not pull back to its April 2020 positions and is adamant on its claims on Ladakh, Arunachal Pradesh etc.)

CHINA-NEPAL: 6-MEMBER PLA DELEGATION LED BY MAJOR GENERAL ZHANG BAOQUN ARRIVED IN NEPAL ON MARCH 9

The Kathmandu Post (March 11) reported that a 6-member PLA delegation led by PLA Major General Zhang Baoqun, Deputy Director of the PLA Office for International Military

Cooperation, called on Nepal Army chief Prabhu Ram Sharma at Nepal Army headquarters on March 10. According to the Nepal Army Directorate of Public Relations and Information, discussions were held on various aspects of the relations between the two neighbouring countries and their armies and issues of mutual interest. The Kathmandu Post (March 9) disclosed that 4 senior PLA officers are accompanying Major General Zhang Baoqun, namely Pei Ling Song Lixing, Li Yingfeng, Wang Guochang and Xi Xiangyang. It said the Chinese military delegation will push for the procurement of an armoured personnel carrier (APC) from China, which has been stalled for a long time. Military procurement, the installation of an ammunition plant for the Nepal Army, the resumption of the joint military exercise, training for Nepal Army officials, and military-to-military cooperation are also on the agenda. The Kathmandu Post (March 9) said the Chinese team led by Major General Zhang arrived in Kathmandu on March 9 and will visit various cultural and tourist places of Kathmandu, Lumbini and Pokhara.

(Comment: The PLA delegation is visiting Nepal within days of Nepal Prime Minister Prachanda forming a new Cabinet with KP Oli. The PLA team had earlier visited Maldives and Sri Lanka. It reached a new security agreement with the Maldives.)

CHINA-PAKISTAN: CHINESE CONSUL GENERAL IN LAHORE ASSURES PAKISTAN OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO TIDE OVER ITS FISCAL PROBLEMS

China's Consul General in Lahore Zhao Shiren assured a business gathering in Faisalabad, Punjab Province that China will help Pakistan overcome its foreign debt by extending financial assistance. He said China has never pressured Islamabad to repay its loans and recently rolled over US \$ 2 billion in debt as the payment date neared. Zhao Shiren said the Chinese debt accounted for 13% of Pakistan's debt.

(Comment: IMF data shows loans from China are higher and around 23%.)

CHINA-RUSSIA: CHINA-RUSSIA-IRAN HOLD JOINT MILITARY EXERCISES NEAR GULF OF OMAN FROM MARCH 11-15

China launched five days (March 11-15) of joint military exercises with Russia and Iran in the Indian Ocean on Mar 11, the Chinese defence ministry said. The Ministry said the navies of China, Iran and Russia would hold the “Maritime Security Belt– 2024” joint exercise in the waters near the Gulf of Oman in the Indian Ocean. It said China sent the 45th escort task force – consisting of the guided-missile destroyer Urumqi, the guided-missile frigate Linyi and the comprehensive supply ship Dongpinghu – to the exercise, “aiming to jointly maintain regional maritime security”.

(Comment: The PLA's 45th naval escort task force has been stationed in the Gulf of Aden in the Indian Ocean since October 2023.)

CHINA-NATO: CHINA-NATO CO-CHAIR 8TH SECURITY POLICY DIALOGUE AND DISCUSS REGIONAL SECURITY LANDSCAPE

China Daily (March 13) reported that China and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) held their eighth security policy dialogue in Beijing on March 13. China's Defense Ministry provided limited details, stating that leaders from China's Central Military Commission's Office for International Military Cooperation and NATO's International Military Staff's Cooperative Security Division co-chaired the discussions. The dialogue focused on areas of mutual interest, including defense exchanges between the two entities and the current international and regional security landscape.

CHINA-US: U.S. AGENCIES UNCOVER CELLULAR MODEMS IN CHINESE-BUILT CARGO CRANES IN U.S. PORTS

National Security (March 8) disclosed that a US congressional probe of Chinese-built cargo cranes deployed at ports throughout the U.S. revealed communications equipment that doesn't appear to support normal operations, fuelling concerns that the foreign machines may pose a covert national-security risk. The installed components in some cases include cellular modems that could be remotely accessed. The discovery of the modems by lawmakers, which hasn't been previously reported, has added to concerns in Washington about port security and

China. The Pentagon and intelligence officials at other agencies in the Biden administration have grown increasingly alarmed by the potential threat of disruption and espionage presented by the giant cranes built by ZPMC, a China-based manufacturer that accounts for nearly 80% of ship-to-shore cranes in use at U.S. ports. Over a dozen cellular modems were found on crane components in use at one U.S. port, and another modem was found inside another port's server room, according to a committee aide.

CHINA-UKRAINE: CHINESE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR EURASIAN AFFAIRS VISITS KIEV SECOND TIME IN A YEAR

Li Hui, the Chinese government's special representative for Eurasian affairs, visited Ukraine and met with Andriy Yermak, chief of staff to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, in Kyiv on March 7. It was his second visit to Kyiv within a year. Yermak said in a statement on President Zelenskiy's website "We appreciate the partnership with China and hope that today's talks will be another step toward deepening and strengthening our relations."

