



# China Global Security Tracker

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## Highlights

- **New defense white paper.** China released its new white paper on “China’s National Defense in the New Era” on July 24.
- **Military budget to increase by 7.5 percent in 2019.** This year’s National People’s Congress, held in March, approved a CNY 1.2 trillion defense budget.
- **US, France, Canada sail through Taiwan Strait, angering China.** Despite already tense relations between Washington and Beijing, the US Navy sailed through the sensitive waterway once a month on average.
- **Western researchers worked with Chinese military scientists on AI.** Media reports revealed that staff from Microsoft collaborated with China’s National University of Defense Technology (NUDT).
- **Mixed results for China’s extradition requests.** In early June, Spain extradited 94 Taiwanese suspects to China. At the other end of the spectrum, the New Zealand Court of Appeals ruled against the extradition of a Korean living in New Zealand.

### **Focus topic: Presenting China as a responsible power - Beijing releases first major defense white paper in four years**

China’s first major defense white paper in four years was published on July 24. While much of its content is familiar from previous white papers, the line taken on the United States and Taiwan is markedly more aggressive, and the political message it sends to both the domestic and the international audience is clear – a strong reminder that the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) is the army of the Communist Party and ideology is key, and that China is a responsible power.

Released by China’s Ministry of National Defense the white paper, titled “China’s National Defense in the New Era,” is the first major defense policy paper to be issued during Xi Jinping’s second term in office and is more comprehensive than earlier versions.

In terms of China’s military strategy and the PLA strategic tasks, the paper mostly reiterates what was included in previous white papers and official statements. China claims to remain committed to the strategic concept of “active defense”, to the no-first-use of nuclear weapons and to building a world-class military that can fight and win wars by 2049 and that is commensurate with China’s international standing. The paper also assesses that, although the country faces difficult challenges, China is still in the middle of an important period of strategic opportunity for development.

From the title of the paper to the actual content, this white paper clearly reflects Xi Jinping’s policy priorities, strategy and global ambitions, and it is entirely consistent with his statement at the 19<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in 2017. There is the repeated emphasis on the fact that the PLA is the army of the Communist Party, which has been a main theme of Xi’s policies, and that, therefore, political loyalty in the military is paramount.

Three broader issues stand out in this 2019 defense white paper:

### Stronger language on Taiwan

Whereas previous white papers devoted only a few lines to Taiwan, this new issue is noticeably more aggressive, sending a clear warning signal to the Taiwanese population that force will be used, if necessary, to achieve China's goals. With presidential elections coming up in 2020, it reflects the increased sense of urgency in Beijing to solve the issue of reunification.

The 2015 white paper on China's Military Strategy only devoted three lines to this issue, mentioning that "reunification is an inevitable trend in the course of national rejuvenation" and criticizing "Taiwan independence separatist forces." This new paper delves deeper into the issue, openly criticizing the Taiwanese government and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) of President Tsai Ing-wen for "stubbornly sticking to Taiwan independence," intensifying hostilities and "borrowing the strength of foreign influence." It not only reiterates China's claim that complete reunification is essential to realizing national rejuvenation, it also refuses once more to renounce the use of force in pursuing this goal and openly admits that the recent series of drills and training exercises around the island of Taiwan – 20 or so since early 2018 – are meant to "send a stern warning to the Taiwan independence separatist forces."

### Not-so-subtle criticism of the United States

Some of the white paper's strongest language is reserved for the role of the United States in the current international security situation. The international security system and order, China claims, are undermined by "growing hegemonism, power politics, unilateralism and constant regional conflicts and wars." This, the paper implies, is to a large extent Washington's doing. The US is accused of double standards on the issue of non-proliferation, and of undermining the strategic balance in the region through the deployment of the THAAD missile defense system in South Korea. Furthermore, the white paper calls out the United States' "wrong practices and provocative activities" regarding a host of issues, including arms sales to Taiwan, sanctions on the CMC Equipment Development Department and "illegal entry" into China's territorial waters and air spaces near "relevant islands and reefs" – a clear reference to the South China Sea.

This critique of the United States' policies and presence in the Asia-Pacific can be read as a response to the latest US National Security Strategy from 2017 and National Defense Strategy from 2018, which named China a "strategic competitor" and criticized Beijing for undermining the international order from within. Beijing clearly intends with this white paper to present a different narrative, showing the United States as the destabilizing power.

This narrative also allows Beijing to continue to promote Xi Jinping's concept of a "community with a shared future for mankind" as the solution to global challenges. Claiming that this concept reflects "the common aspirations of all peoples throughout the world", the paper commits the PLA to fulfilling the international obligations of a major power and working towards global peace, stability and prosperity. The PLA will also "actively participate in the reform of the global security governance system," it claims.

## Intended for an international audience

The overall intention of this white paper is clear – to signal to the outside world that China and its armed forces are responsible, engaged members of the international community, especially in contrast with the United States under President Trump.

From the very beginning it makes clear that the target audience for this document is the international community, rather than domestic audiences, opening with the sentence: “The Chinese government is issuing *China’s National Defense in the New Era* [...] with a view to helping the international community better understand China’s national defense.” This helps explain the length and level of detail in the document, which clearly strives to give an impression of transparency to international audiences regarding China’s defense policies and the PLA.

As such, the paper contains entire sections, as well as appendices for the first time, on issues that are of interest or concern to international China watchers and decision makers and that help support China’s statements that the PLA remains committed to a defensive national defense policy and to developing constructive relations with foreign militaries in order to safeguard world peace.

The paper, for example, describes China’s recent military reforms at length, and also provides more information on its defense budgets since 2012. Additionally, a series of tables in the appendix list the major multilateral treaties on both arms control and counterterrorism that China has joined, as well as major joint exercises by the PLA and foreign militaries, and major security dialogues that the PLA participates in. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a key foreign policy concept of Xi Jinping’s, is notably absent from this white paper, possibly as a response to the growing international backlash against this initiative.

Overall, while this white paper does not outline any major changes to China’s defense policies or strategy, it helps China signal its red lines on a number of issues, from Taiwan to the South China Sea, and sends a clear political message to the international community. Xi Jinping’s goals for the PLA are clearly here to stay and we should expect continued efforts to complete modernization of the military by 2035 and fully transform the PLA into a world-class force that can fight and win wars by 2049. Therefore, over the next few years we are likely to see a PLA that is increasingly active and assertive overseas and, as a result, friction with the United States and other powers – particularly in the Asia-Pacific – will continue to rise. Beijing’s aggressive tone on several issues, especially around its “core interests”, meanwhile, will continue to throw into question China’s claims that it is a force for world peace and stability.

## Domestic developments

### Foreign and security policy

- **Xi Jinping delivers first major speech on Taiwan.** On January 2, in a speech marking the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of China's 'Message to Compatriots in Taiwan', Xi Jinping outlined his policy towards Taiwan. Xi defended "one country, two systems" as the way to resolve cross-strait conflicts and emphasized that reunification is key to "national rejuvenation", signaling his determination not to pass this issue on to next generations. Xi was also clear that China does not renounce the use of force in order to achieve reunification. Although no explicit timeline for reunification was set, the connection Xi has drawn between national rejuvenation and reunification suggests that steps must be taken by 2049. Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen responded by emphasizing that Taiwan will never accept the one country, two systems solution.
- **Military budget to increase by 7.5 percent in 2019.** This year's National People's Congress, held in March, approved a 1.2 trillion CNY defense budget – a 7.5 percent increase year-on-year. This follows 25 years of continuous defense budget increases, although the pace of growth is slowing. The government work report, as well as Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi's press conference, reiterated Xi Jinping's foreign and security policy priorities, including building a strong military loyal to the Party, defending multilateralism and building a 'human community with a shared destiny'.
- **Xi proposes building a 'maritime community with shared destiny'.** An extension of Xi's concept of a 'human community with shared destiny', Xi proposed this adapted concept at a meeting with the heads of the foreign delegations that attended the naval events marking the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) in April. According to Xi, the idea of the maritime community is that "all countries should consult as equals, improve the mechanism for communication in face of crises, strengthen regional security cooperation, and promote the proper solution to maritime disputes."

## Force development and capabilities

- **People's Liberation Army (PLA) outlines military priorities for 2019.** In a New Year's *PLA Daily* editorial, the Chinese military described its 'work focus' for this year. Main priorities include strengthening training and preparation to prepare for combat, continuing to implement military reform plans, promoting reform and innovation, and party building.
- **Combat readiness remains a top priority.** At a Central Military Commission meeting held in Beijing on January 4, Xi Jinping once more ordered the armed forces at all levels to focus on enhancing their combat readiness and asked that they improve their capability to conduct joint operations and their military training under combat conditions. This was followed by the release of a new regulation on the supervision of military training, which came into effect on March 1. The new rules aim to standardize and improve training inspections in order to ensure that all PLA units focus on combat capabilities.
- **Purged PLA general sentenced to life in prison.** Fang Fenghui, former head of the PLA Joint Staff Department and former member of the CMC, was sentenced in February to life in jail for bribery. Fang was first detained in August 2017, along with fellow CMC member Zhang Yang, who later took his own life. In October 2018, Fang was stripped of rank and party membership. According to some media reports, Fang's conviction also led to the demotion of over 70 senior PLA officers who were accused of participating in Fang's corrupt activities. This is only the latest case in the sweeping anti-corruption campaign inside the PLA. According to official figures, between 2012 and 2017 over 13,000 officers were punished for corruption-related offenses.
- **Marine corps expands, gets upgraded.** Official Chinese media confirmed in April that the PLA Navy has significantly expanded its marine corps and has turned it into a unit of its own, although it did not reveal the size of the new unit. This is a response to China's growing need to develop capable amphibious operations.
- **PLA Navy celebrates its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary.** On April 23 the PLAN celebrated its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a multinational celebration, including symposiums, a naval fleet review and other exchanges. About a dozen countries, including Australia, India, Russia, South Korea and Japan, sent warships to participate in the parade, which took place in the Yellow Sea off Shandong province.
- **PLA unveils new equipment and capabilities:**
  - **The PLA Navy displayed the first of its new generation of guided missile destroyers, the Type 055, during the naval parade to celebrate its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary.** The destroyer Nanchang was launched two years ago and is about to complete sea trials, it is expected to be commissioned later in 2019. The Navy also launched two more Type 052D destroyers, bringing the total number in service to 20, as well as the eighth Type 071 amphibious assault ship. Meanwhile, China's aircraft carrier program continues its rapid progress. China's first domestically-made aircraft carrier – the Type 001A – went on its fifth sea trial from February 27 to March 5 and is apparently on track to enter into service in late 2019. It was not all good news for China's navy, however. On March 12, a PLAN fighter jet crashed during a training mission in Hainan province, killing both pilots.

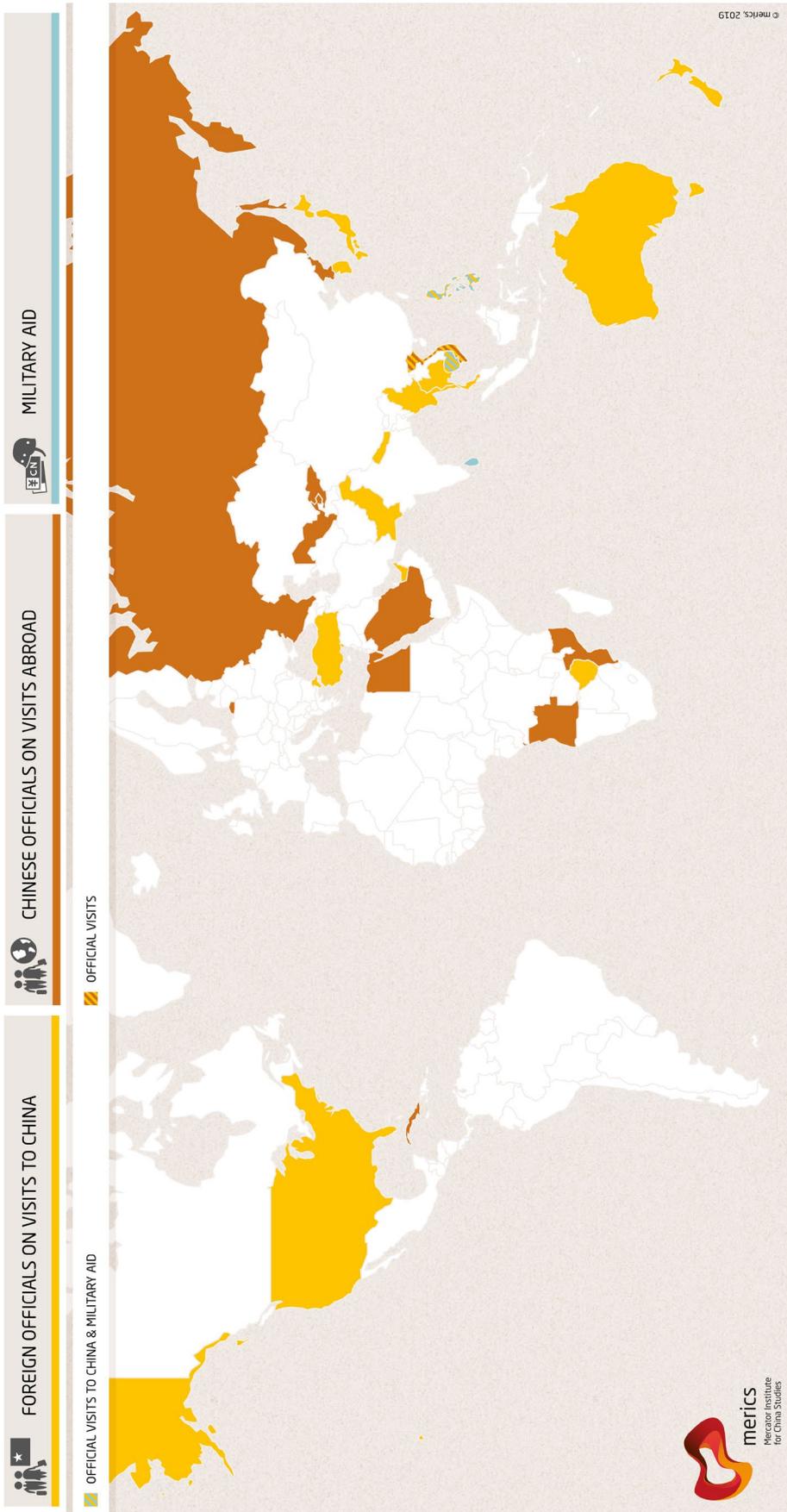
- **The PLA Rocket Force (PLARF) confirmed in January that it has deployed its DF-26 ‘Guam killer’ intermediate-range ballistic missile to Northwest China, releasing footage of the missiles in action during an exercise shortly after.** In another rare display of transparency, the PLARF also showcased ten DF-21 anti-ship ballistic missiles in a promotional video released in May. These moves are a clear signal to the United States about China’s growing capabilities and its ability to place US assets in the Asia-Pacific at risk.
- **Developments in civil-military integration (CMI):**
  - **Western researchers worked with Chinese military scientists on AI.** Media reports revealed that staff from Microsoft have worked with China’s National University of Defense Technology (NUDT) on AI. Academics from Microsoft and the NUDT, which is directly controlled by the Central Military Commission (CMC), reportedly published joint papers on technologies that may end up being used for surveillance and censorship, assisting the Party and the PLA.
  - **China practices amphibious landings with civil-military drill.** From May 29 to June 3, PLA Navy and civilian ships conducted a joint civil-military cross-sea transport drill in the Yellow Sea, carrying troops and armored vehicles. Such civil-military cooperation would help the PLAN overcome the operational barriers created by its limited number of landing ships. This is of particular significance for Taiwan and the South China Sea, as these two areas would be the most likely targets of a potential amphibious landing mission.
- **China’s successes and setbacks in arms trade:**
  - **Chinese UAVs used in Libya conflict.** A group of UN experts found that Chinese-made missiles and drones were most likely used during the April air strikes in Tripoli, which killed over 200 people. The group identified Wing Loong UAV variants as the most likely drones that were used by the Libyan National Army.
  - **Russia completes delivery of Su-35 fighter jets to China.** In April, Moscow confirmed that it had delivered the last of the 24 Sukhoi Su-35s that China ordered in 2015 under a USD 2.5 billion deal. These fourth-generation aircraft are destined for service in the PLA Air Force, and the first batch entered into service in April 2018. Media reports also suggest that Russia may now be considering pitching its fifth-generation Su-57 jets to China.
  - **China to receive second regimental set of Russia’s S-400 air defense system.** According to Russian media, China will receive the second set of the S-400 system in the second half of 2019. In preparation for this, 100 servicemen from the PLARF reportedly received training in Russia on the operation and combat uses of the system. China was the first foreign customer of the S-400 Triumph. It received the first regimental set in the spring of 2018 under a USD 3 billion contract signed in 2015.

## Security diplomacy

### Defense diplomacy

#### High-level meetings

- **CMC members meet high-ranking foreign defense officials.** Between January and June, CMC members met with officials from over 30 countries, both in Beijing and abroad. Most of these countries are located along the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), especially in Southeast and Central Asia. Minister of Defense and CMC member Wei Fenghe took the majority of these meetings, meant to strengthen bilateral relations and emphasize the PLA's international role.
- **Defense Minister attends international meetings and conferences.** China's Minister of Defense Wei Fenghe led the delegations to the 8<sup>th</sup> Moscow Conference on International Security, the 16<sup>th</sup> Defense Ministers' Meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and the IISS-organized Shangri-La Dialogue. In all of these meetings, Wei stressed that China is committed to taking on international responsibilities and maintaining global peace and stability. In implied jabs at the US, he also repeated that China opposes unilateralism, zero-sum games and power politics. Wei struck a more assertive tone at the Shangri-La Dialogue, held in Singapore in June, where he spoke strongly on the issues of Taiwan and the South China Sea, accusing the US of interfering in China's internal affairs and destabilizing the region.
- **China to hold first China-Africa peace and security forum.** China's Ministry of Defense announced in June that the first China-Africa peace and security forum will be held in Beijing from July 14 to 20. Officials from a number of African countries and the African Union were invited to discuss the construction of a 'China-Africa community with a shared destiny', among other issues. These forums give Beijing an opportunity to spread its own security narratives and priorities.

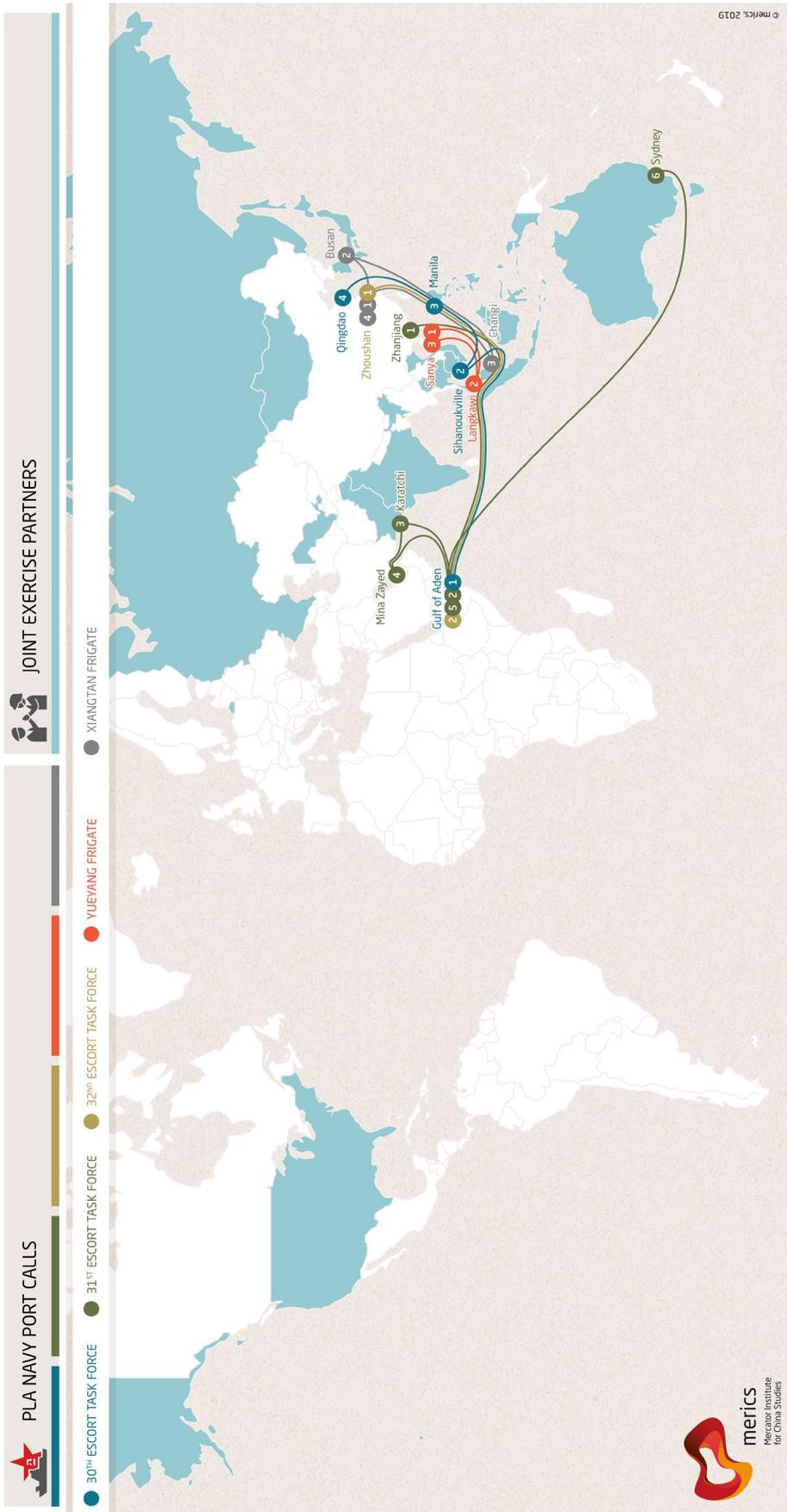


### Military aid and training

- **Philippines, Sri Lanka and other countries receive Chinese military aid.** In a bid to increase its influence in the Asia-Pacific and boost its own military industry, China donated military equipment to the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Cambodia for a total value of over CNY 230 million. Sri Lanka in particular received about CNY 100 million to procure Chinese-made counter-insurgency equipment, along with 150 vehicles for its military and police force. Manila and Colombo are regular receivers of Chinese military aid. In March, China's ambassador to Lebanon also pledged to approve donations for the Lebanese military, but these have not yet materialized.
- **China trains Fijian Navy personnel.** Chinese military personnel spent four months in Fiji training local naval personnel to operate the vessel which was donated to the Fijian Navy by Beijing in December 2018.

### Port calls and joint exercises

- **PLA continues to participate in joint exercises with foreign militaries.** Between January and June, the PLA – particularly the PLA Navy – participated in about a dozen joint exercises with foreign militaries, mostly focused on counter-terrorism, counter-piracy and peacekeeping. Most notably, this year's edition of the joint China-Russia exercise codenamed Joint Sea took place in late April in the East China Sea and Yellow Sea. These exercises are supposed to contribute to turning the PLA into a military that can "fight and win wars" by providing operational experience, as well as insights into how other militaries operate.
- **PLAN port calls concentrated in China's neighborhood.** On their way back from the counter-piracy operation in the Gulf of Aden, the PLA Navy's 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> escort task forces visited a number of countries in the Asia-Pacific, including Cambodia, the Philippines and Australia. The PLAN also sent ships to Pakistan, Singapore, Malaysia and the UAE for joint drills or international exhibitions.



## Leadership in regional security frameworks

- **Xi attends SCO and CICA summits.** In June, Xi Jinping attended the 19<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, and the 5<sup>th</sup> summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. The resulting Bishkek Declaration and Dushanbe Declaration largely reflected China's security priorities in the region. Beijing, however, failed to secure India's support for the BRI. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the only attending head of state who did not sign up to a statement included in the Bishkek Declaration supporting China's BRI.

## Conflict prevention and resolution

- **Pakistan asks China to mediate in conflict with India.** China asked New Delhi and Islamabad to exercise restraint in February, after tensions between the two countries escalated in the wake of the Pulwama terror attack in Kashmir, for which Pakistan-based terrorist group Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) claimed responsibility. India responded to the attack in Pulwama with an air strike against a JeM terrorist camp on the other side of the Line of Control. Pakistan, which is often referred to by China as an "all-weather friend" requested Beijing's help to ease tensions with India. Beijing responded by dispatching vice-foreign minister Kong Xuanyou to Islamabad to mediate and expressed support for Islamabad's counter-terrorism efforts.
- **China holds talks with Taliban to discuss Afghan peace process.** In June, Beijing announced that it had recently hosted a Taliban delegation as part of its efforts to facilitate a peace process in Afghanistan. The delegation was reportedly led by Abdul Ghani Baradar, the Taliban representative in Qatar. The visit took place shortly before the Taliban held another round of talks with the US. Stability in Afghanistan has long been one of Beijing's priorities in the region, as it is concerned about links between militants in Afghanistan and in neighboring Xinjiang.

## Law enforcement cooperation

- **China's 39<sup>th</sup> extradition treaty enters into force.** The extradition treaty between China and Grenada, which was signed in 2016, came into force on January 10 after it was ratified by both countries' legislatures in late 2018, bringing the total number of China's extradition treaties to 39.
- **China, Japan discuss acceleration of extradition treaty negotiations.** On April 15, during his visit to China, Japan's Minister of Foreign Affairs Taro Kono held a meeting with his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, in Beijing. The ministers discussed the need to accelerate negotiations for the early entry into force of the China-Japan Treaty on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons and the China-Japan Treaty on Extradition.
- **Former head of Interpol confesses to taking bribes.** Meng Hongwei, the former Interpol chief and Chinese deputy Minister of Public Security, confessed in a Chinese court in June to taking almost CNY 15 million in bribes and kickbacks. Meng went missing in late September after flying back to China while he was still head of Interpol. A probe into Meng by China's anti-corruption body, the National Supervisory Commission, also found that he had "resisted implementing central Party decisions", raising questions over the motivations behind his arrest.
- **Mixed results for China's extradition requests.** In early June, Spain extradited 94 Taiwanese suspects to China under the terms of its extradition treaty with Beijing. These were part of a larger group of 237 people, most from Taiwan and some from China, who were arrested by Spanish police in 2016 under suspicion of committing telecom fraud and swindling Chinese citizens out of millions of euros. Beijing praised Madrid for its adherence to the one-China principle, but Spain's decision also drew strong criticism from authorities in Taiwan and civil society organizations. At the other end of the spectrum, also in June, the New Zealand Court of Appeals ruled against the extradition to China of a Korean citizen living in New Zealand, citing the difficulty in obtaining assurances that he would receive a fair trial and would not be subject to torture in China. The Swedish Supreme Court also made a preliminary decision not to extradite former Chinese official Qiao Jianjun. Qiao is accused of embezzling money while he was a grain storehouse director in Hunan province, which he then transferred out of China. Neither Sweden nor New Zealand have extradition treaties with China.

## Force projection

### Military operations other than war

#### Peacekeeping operations

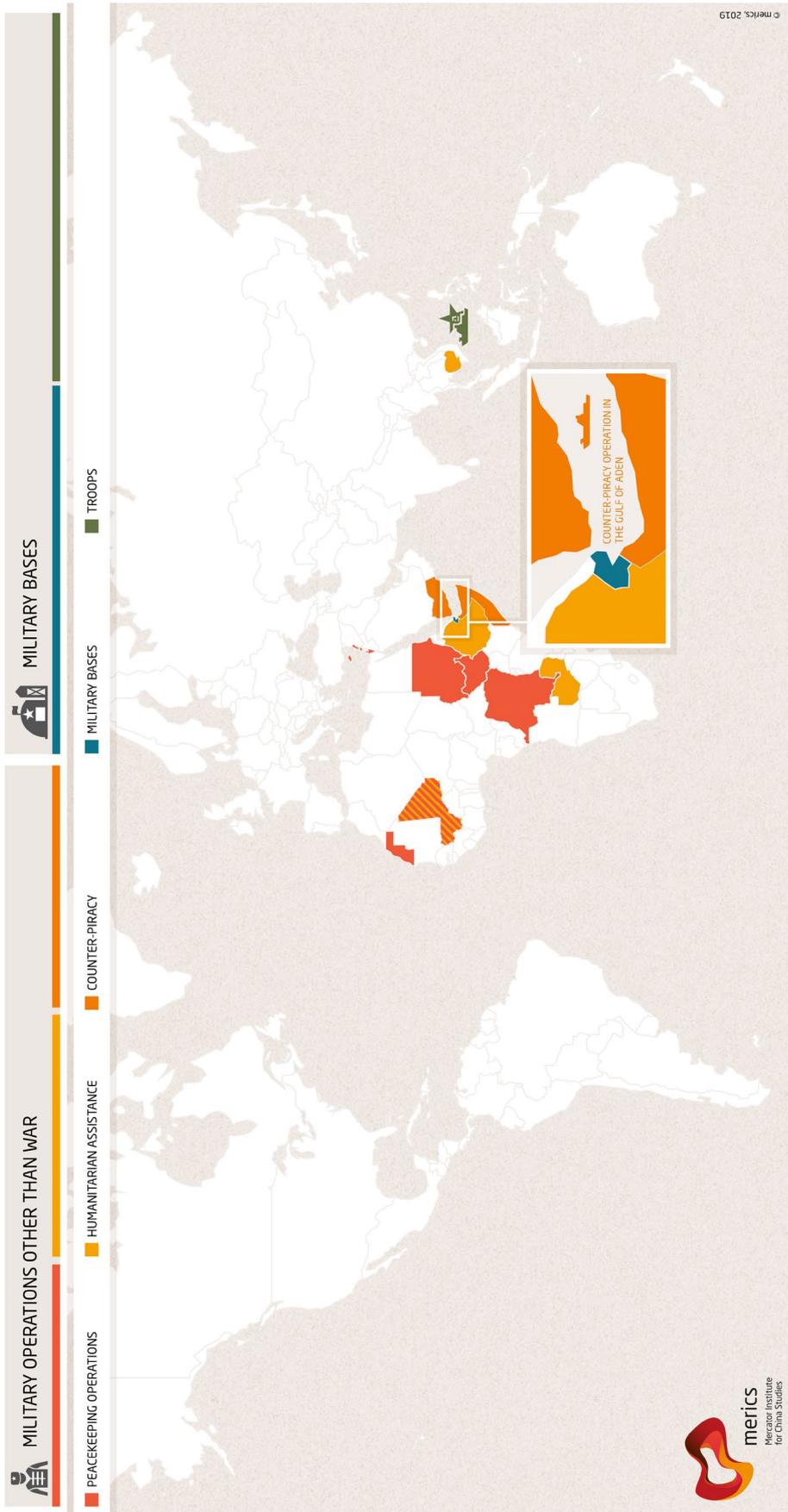
- **China's participation in UN peacekeeping continues.** Between January and June, China continued its participation in eight existing UN peacekeeping operations. In May, the number of operations that China participates in increased to nine, as four police officers were deployed to the UN's UNISFA mission in Abyei. Total deployment remained broadly stable, with 2,519 personnel deployed at the end of June. China's largest single ongoing participation in a UN peacekeeping mission remain in South Sudan, with 1,056 personnel at the end of June.

#### Counter-piracy

- **China marks 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of participation in counter-piracy operation in Gulf of Aden.** The PLA Navy's 31<sup>st</sup> escort task force remained in the waters of the Gulf of Aden from late December 2018 until early May 2019, when it was replaced by the 32<sup>nd</sup> escort task force. China sent its first fleet to the region in late December 2008 and, since then, the PLAN has escorted over 6,600 ships and rescued 70 ships in distress, according to official figures released by China's Ministry of Defense.

#### Humanitarian assistance and disaster relief

- **PLAN Peace Ark hospital ship completes 9<sup>th</sup> world tour.** On January 18, the hospital ship arrived back in Zhoushan, China, after its 9<sup>th</sup> world tour. The Peace Ark embarked on its first global voyage in 2010. Since then, it has visited 43 countries, turning its Harmonious Mission humanitarian tours into one of the key elements of China's military diplomacy.
- **PLA medical teams deploy abroad.** Chinese military medical teams were present in Zambia, Ethiopia and Cambodia, among several other countries, between January and June. Most of these deployments are regular year-long missions to work in the hospitals of the local armed forces and provide medical assistance to local communities. China's Ministry of Defense has, for example, sent medical teams to Zambia since 1984.



## Force deployments and counter-terrorism

- **China steps up pressure on Taiwan with military maneuvers.** Beijing continued to conduct military shows of strength around Taiwan, raising tensions as the island's 2020 presidential elections approach. Between January and June, PLA aircraft flew close to the island three times – in January, March and April – in long-distance training exercises. In the March exercises, two PLA Air Force J-11 fighter planes crossed the median line in the Taiwan Strait for the first time in 20 years, and Taipei responded by scrambling jets to intercept them. The April maneuvers also included PLA naval forces in what was called by China's Ministry of Defense a way to "test the capability of multi-service integrated joint operations". These drills have been called a threat by the Taiwanese authorities, and have been denounced as coercion by the US, but Beijing continues to defend them as necessary and "within the normal legal rights of a sovereign country". The PLA Navy also conducted live-fire exercises at the northern end of the Taiwan Strait in May, which were followed by the passage of aircraft carrier Liaoning through the strait in June.
- **US, France, Canada sail through Taiwan Strait, angering China.** The United States Navy continued with its Taiwan Strait transits, sailing through the sensitive waterway once a month between January and May. Amidst already tense US-China relations, these passages elicited a strong response from Beijing, which accused Washington of taking provocative actions and causing instability in the region. The US was not the only country that challenged China's claims in the area. Both France and Canada also sent vessels through the waterway in April and June. Beijing responded to the French Navy's passage with unusually strong language, criticizing it as "illegal" entry into China's waters – wording that was never used to refer to the US Navy's operations in the area.
- **China, Philippines clash in the South China Sea.** Despite the current friendly relations between China and the Philippines, Manila reacted in anger as China's maritime militia swarmed the Philippine-controlled Thitu Island, in the South China Sea. Since January, about 275 Chinese militia boats have been reportedly congregating around the island and denying access to Filipino fishermen. President Duterte warned China to "lay off" the island, and threatened to use military action. Tensions between Beijing and Manila further increased in June, after a Chinese vessel collided with and sank a Filipino fishing boat that was anchored near Recto Bank, in the West Philippine Sea, then leaving the scene and abandoning the crew – an action that was denounced as "cowardly" by Philippine Minister of Defense Delfin Lorenzana.
- **US, other countries challenge China's claims to the South China Sea.** The US Navy continued to conduct freedom of navigation of operations (FONOPs) near contested islands in the South China Sea, triggering sharp criticism from Beijing, which claims the area as its own territory. The US has reportedly conducted over 15 FONOPs in the region since October 2015, as a response to China's militarization of the islands. In January, the US and the UK conducted their first joint naval drill in the South China Sea since 2010, as Washington tries to secure support from allies in challenging Beijing's claims. The US was also joined by partner navies in May, as ships from the Indian and Philippine navies and the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force joined a US Navy guided-missile destroyer to sail through the contested waters.

- **J-10 fighter jets deployed to South China Sea.** Satellite images from June 19, as revealed by CNN, show that China has deployed at least four J-10 fighter jets to Woody Island, in the South China Sea. This is reportedly the first deployment of jets to the island since 2017. Woody Island was also the chosen location for Beijing's first deployment of H-6K bombers to the area in 2018.

### Out-of-area logistics

- **China plans to develop island city, logistics base on Woody Island.** The government of the city of Sansha, established in 2012 on Woody Island in the Paracels, held a meeting on March 15 to press ahead with plans to build an "island city" and turn Woody Island and two smaller islets into a "national key strategic service and logistics base." This is very much in line with China's militarization of the South China Sea.
- **Cambodia continues to deny rumors that China is building a military base in the country.** Cambodia's Ministry of Defense has once again denied allegations that China is building a military base in Koh Kong province. The issue made the news in late 2018, when US Vice President Mike Pence raised it in a letter to Cambodia's Prime Minister Hun Sen. The story was dismissed by Hun Sen as "fake news", but a piece published by War on the Rocks on May 9 raised questions again, claiming that satellite imagery shows that China's Union Development Group, a state-owned construction firm, is building a port that is long enough for military vessels and aircraft, and matches the length of the runways built in the South China Sea. Additionally, Reuters reported that Phnom Penh has turned down US support to repair a training facility and boat depot at Ream Naval Base, further fueling speculation that this may be because of plans to turn this into a Chinese base.

### Cyber and space capabilities

- **Debate over Huawei continues amid US-China trade war.** Despite multiple attempts by the Chinese telecommunications giant to reassure governments that the company would not act on behalf of Beijing even if requested to do so, the US continued to advocate for a complete ban on Huawei. Between January and June, Washington took a number of measures against the company: it unsealed a number of indictments against Huawei, accusing the company of trade theft and fraud; President Trump signed an executive order blocking US businesses from using Huawei equipment and services; and the Commerce Department placed Huawei on the entity list. US officials have also increased pressure on European governments to ban Huawei from their 5G networks, even threatening to pare back intelligence sharing if they allow Huawei to participate in 5G rollouts. The debate in Europe, however, is still ongoing. A March 26 European Commission recommendation on the security of 5G networks marked an attempt to launch an EU-wide process to deal with this issue. This process will lead to an EU-wide risk assessment, which will be delivered in October.

- **Concerns about military links of China's satellite stations.** In January, the Swedish Defence Research Agency warned that a Chinese-built satellite station in Kiruna could be serving the Chinese military. These concerns stem from the blurred lines between China's civilian and military sectors, especially when it comes to its space program. Similarly, media reports also questioned the opacity of a Chinese military-run space station in Argentina's Patagonia region, which reportedly operates with little oversight by the Argentinian government.
- **Chinese hackers used NSA tools for attacks, cybersecurity firm claims.** A report by cybersecurity firm Symantec, unveiled on May 6, claimed that Chinese intelligence agents acquired NSA hacking tools in 2016 and then used them for attacks against governments and companies in Europe and Asia, including in Belgium, Luxembourg, Vietnam, the Philippines and Hong Kong.
- **Beidou satellite system continues to expand.** Although China's navigation system started providing basic global coverage in 2018, Beijing plans to launch ten more satellites in 2019, aiming to fully complete the Beidou global network by 2020.
- **China reaches far side of the moon.** On January 2, China's Chang'e spacecraft made a soft-landing on the far side of the moon, in a step meant to pave the way for further space exploration. This makes China the third country to ever land a probe on the moon, and the first one to do it on its far side, showing the rapid progress of China's space program.
- **China's space program, private sector face launch failures.** In March, China's OneSpace attempted a launch to become the first private company in China to place a satellite in orbit, after two successful suborbital launches in 2018. The company, however, lost control of the launch vehicle shortly after take-off. And in May, China's space program suffered a new setback as the launch of a Long March-4 rocket carrying a Yaogan-33 satellite – reportedly used for military reconnaissance purposes – also failed to launch. This was the first launch failure since July 2017.
- **China conducts first offshore rocket launch.** In June, China successfully launched a Long March-11 rocket from a mobile launch platform in the Yellow Sea, sending seven satellites into space. These included two satellites developed by the China Academy of Space Technology to improve the accuracy of weather forecasts in China, as well as five commercial satellites.

## Global security architecture

### Influence in the UN

- **China votes to blacklist Pakistani militant after a decade of opposition.** On May 1, a UN Security Council committee voted to blacklist Masood Azhar, head of Pakistan-based terrorist group Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), after China released its technical hold on a proposal that would subject him to an assets freeze, a travel ban and an arms embargo. India had sought for years to blacklist Azhar, who also claimed responsibility for the February Pulwama attack in India-administered Kashmir. China's vote in favor of the listing of Azhar was widely seen as a diplomatic concession to India meant to improve bilateral ties.
- **China, Russia block UN Security Council resolution on Sudan.** China and Russia voted on June 4 against a bid at the UN Security Council to condemn the killing of civilians in Sudan and to call for an end to the violence which followed the ousting of Omar al-Bashir in April. China and Sudan maintain close relations, and Chinese companies control a large share of Sudan's oil industry.
- **Blocking international action on Xinjiang remains a key goal of China's work at the UN.** In March, China's ambassador to the UN, Yu Jianhua, warned other countries not to attend an event on Xinjiang organized by the Permanent Mission of the US because it was based on "groundless allegations". The request, made in a letter to various countries, requested that they refuse to sponsor or attend this side event of the Human Rights Council "in the interest of bilateral relations and continued multilateral cooperation." In mid-June, China invited the UN counter-terrorism chief Vladimir Voronkov to visit Xinjiang and claimed to have reached "broad consensus" with the UN on the situation. Voronkov's visit drew criticism, as it could be seen as UN support for and legitimization of China's policies in Xinjiang, including its network of re-education camps.

### Non-proliferation

- **China continues to block India's accession to the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).** In January, Beijing signaled that it would continue to block India's accession to the NSG over New Delhi's refusal to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Signing on to the NPT is normally a prerequisite to join the NSG, but India is reported to have secured a temporary waiver from other NSG member countries.
- **China rejects calls to join new missile control agreement.** On January 1, US President Trump announced that the US would withdraw from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty within six months. He cited Russia's violations of the treaty as the main reason behind this decision. His administration, however, also pointed to China, though not party to the treaty, as one of the main reasons for the withdrawal, as China's military expansion and development of missile technology and stockpiles of missiles could allow Beijing to challenge the US in the Western Pacific. Since then, Beijing has rejected several calls to join a new arms control agreement. In February, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, during a speech at the Munich Security Conference, called for a new global treaty including China. Beijing's response emphasized that China's missile capabilities are defensive and, therefore, it does not need to join

an expanded INF treaty. And in May, after President Trump and President Putin discussed the possibility of a new accord between the two countries and China, Beijing categorically said that it would not take part in “any trilateral negotiations on a nuclear disarmament agreement.” Ultimately, any Chinese participation in a new arms control regime would face serious challenges. China believes that the countries with the largest nuclear arsenals – the US and Russia – have a responsibility to reduce their stockpiles before they can ask other countries to do so. Besides, joining an INF-like treaty would significantly impact China’s ability to project power over issues such as the South China Sea or Taiwan. According to IISS statistics, should the INF Treaty as it currently stands apply to China, it would affect 95 percent of China’s missile arsenal.

- **Xi Jinping pledges to find political solution to North Korea nuclear issue.** During his visit to Pyongyang in June, Xi Jinping said China would support North Korea’s new “strategic path” and vowed to work with Kim Jong-Un to achieve a “political resolution” to the issue.
- **China remains fully committed to Iran nuclear deal.** After a late-June meeting in Vienna with delegates from Iran, Russia, China, the UK, France and Germany, Beijing stressed that it rejects Washington’s zero-tolerance policy on Iran oil sales, and announced that it will do everything it can to maintain good relations with Tehran and protect the interests of Chinese companies in Iran. China will also continue with its project to redesign Iran’s Arak heavy water reactor. Beijing, however, also urged Tehran to fully comply with the deal.

## Global cyber governance

- **China joins new UN Group of Governmental Experts on cyberspace.** In December 2018, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) established two new processes to discuss ICT-related security issues for the period 2019-2021. The first is a new Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on ‘Advancing responsible State behavior in cyberspace in the context of international security’, of which China is a member. This GGE is the sixth such group to have been convened by the UN since 2004, and it follows in the footsteps of its 2016-2017 predecessor, which failed to reach consensus on a final report, reportedly because China, Russia and Cuba objected to some of the principles included in it. At issue, it has been reported, were principles like the right to respond to internationally wrongful acts (a reference to countermeasures), the right to self-defense and international humanitarian law. It remains to be seen whether China will behave similarly in this new GGE. The other process launched by the UNGA is a working group which will be open to all UN member states and in which China will most likely participate. China continues to use these opportunities to push its own model of internet governance, which is centered on the issue of state sovereignty over cyberspace.

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