

China Sentry

Weekly Debrief: December 3, 2023

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Contents

U.S. Government Updates	1
House Select Committee on the CCP urges investigation on Chinese drone manufacturer; holds hearing on Chinese influence	1
Biden unveils new actions to strengthen supply chains, including for the Indo-Pacific region	2
Commerce secretary urges for tighter export controls	2
Department of State releases the 2022 Country Reports on Terrorism (CRT)	2
Department of Defense Updates	3
Pentagon: US arms industry struggling to keep up with China	3
Pentagon approves first Rapid Defense Experimentation Reserve projects for US INDOPACOM	3
SSN-AUKUS developments from defense ministers meeting	3
Marine Corps looks at ocean glider for rapid resupply to fight China	4
Newly Released Reports	4

U.S. Government Updates

House Select Committee on the CCP urges investigation on Chinese drone manufacturer; holds hearing on Chinese influence

A group of bipartisan lawmakers from the House Select Committee on the CCP urged the Biden administration to open investigations on a Chinese drone manufacturer, Autel Robotics and its subsidiary, Autel Robotics USA LLC, on the

grounds that they are openly affiliated with the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and could transmit sensitive data to the PLA.¹

The committee also held a hearing titled "Discourse Power: The CCP's Strategy to Shape the Global Information Space" with witnesses from the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Hudson Institute, and Freedom House participating.²

Biden unveils new actions to strengthen supply chains, including for the Indo-Pacific region

During the inaugural convening of the new White House Council on Supply Chain Resilience, President Biden unveiled more than 30 new actions to strengthen America's supply chains. Part of this effort contains the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) Supply Chain Agreement with 13 partners. The IPEF concluded a first-of-its-kind Supply Chain Agreement that gives partners new tools to build a diversified, competitive supply chain for critical sectors such as those related to semiconductors, critical minerals, and cold chain services.³

Commerce secretary urges for tighter export controls

While attending the Reagan National Security Forum in California, Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo stressed the need to tighten export controls and their enforcement to mitigate China outpacing the US in emerging technologies. Raimondo stressed the need to work with allies as part of the department's strategy and noted the need for a budget increase for the Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) that has had "the same budget today as it did a decade ago".⁴

Department of State releases the 2022 Country Reports on Terrorism (CRT)

The counterterrorism efforts of the People's Republic of China (PRC) continued to target ethnic Uyghurs and other Muslims in Xinjiang as so-called extremists for engaging in standard practices of Islam.⁵

¹Select Committee on the CCP

²Select Committee on the CCP [2]

³White House

⁴Breaking Defense

⁵Department of State

Department of Defense Updates

Pentagon: US arms industry struggling to keep up with China

America's defense industry is struggling to achieve the kind of speed and responsiveness to stay ahead in a high-tech arms race with competitors such as China, an unreleased draft of a new Pentagon report on the defense industry warns. America's defense industry is struggling to achieve the kind of speed and responsiveness to stay ahead in a high-tech arms race with competitors such as China, an unreleased draft of a new Pentagon report on the defense industry warns.⁶

Pentagon approves first Rapid Defense Experimentation Reserve projects for US INDOPACOM

The Pentagon's chief technology officer is preparing to transition the first slate of joint, rapid experimentation projects to production this fiscal year, following approval from Defense Department leaders. While Undersecretary of Research and Development Heidi Shyu declined to provide details on the projects that moved forward, it was noted that the first round of capabilities focused on long-range fire needs in U.S. Indo-Pacific Command.⁷

SSN-AUKUS developments from defense ministers meeting

Secretary of Defense Austin hosted Richard Marles MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, Australia, and the Grant Shapps, Secretary of State for Defence, United Kingdom, at the Defense Innovation Unit Headquarters in California to discuss the AUKUS enhanced defense and security partnership, particularly the pathway for Australia to acquire nuclear-powered submarines with assistance from the US and UK (SSN-AUKUS). Developments noted during the meeting:⁸

- Nine Australian Navy officers have graduated from nuclear power schools in the US and UK, along with the first tranche of Australian industry personnel having commenced work at Pearl Harbor to develop their skills in building submarines.
- Announcement that Australian sailors will commence duty in Guam in early 2024 to build their SSN maintenance skills. Additionally, the first planned maintenance activity of a US SSN is planned to occur at HMAS Stirling in the second half of 2024.

⁶POLITICO

⁷Defense News

⁸Department of Defense

- Australian has introduced legislation to established a framework to ensure nuclear safety within the Australian submarine enterprise.
- The AUKUS partners are developing artificial intelligence and technologies for data analysis, force protection, space threats and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) operations.

Marine Corps looks at ocean glider for rapid resupply to fight China

The Marine Corps Warfighting Lab has signed a nearly \$5 million contract with Rhode Island-based Regent to test out hydrofoiling seagliders, which may provide an innovative solution for medical evacuation and resupply in littoral regions. Thalheimer, CEO of Regent, said the glider could fill a known gap in the Marines' high-speed logistics mission in the Pacific while freeing up helicopters and other longer-range assets for different tasks.⁹

Newly Released Reports

- [Singing From the CCP's Songsheet: The Role of Foreign Influencers in China's Propaganda System](#) Australian Strategic Policy Institute
- [Assessing China's AI Workforce](#) Center for Security and Emerging Technology
- [China's Sea-Based Nuclear Deterrent: Organizational, Operational, and Strategic Implications](#) China Maritime Studies Institute
- [Greater Conflict-Phase Access to Asia: U.S. Policies for Five Indo-Pacific Countries & U.S.-Japan Alliance Conference: The U.S.-Japan Alliance in an Era of Strategic Competition](#) RAND Corp.
- [PRC in International Organizations](#) U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission

⁹Military Times