
China Briefs

Second 3-Person Crew Arrives on the *Tianhe* Space Module

The second crew of Chinese astronauts arrived on *Tianhe*, the first module of *Tiangong*, the China Space Station (CSS), and will stay for six months, continuing work preparatory to the arrival of two additional science modules that will complete the station. Their lengthy stay will give experts a chance to study further the effects on humans of long-term stays in micro-gravity.

The team includes Wang Yaping, the teacher who gave the first physics lesson from space to 60 million children in China on her first mission. She said she would be doing another lesson from space on this, her second tour. She will also be performing a spacewalk, the first Chinese woman to do so. Mission commander, Zhai Zhigang, a space veteran, conducted the first of China's EVAs (extra-vehicular activities). The third astronaut, Ye Guangfu, on his first space mission, has been training for ten years, including in Italy with the ESA (European Space Agency). Ye is fluent in English, an important capability as foreign astronauts begin to work with the CSS.

Several ESA astronauts are in training, some of whom have already become quite proficient in Chinese. There will be more to follow. The current mission, which was covered for several hours by CGTN and other Chinese stations, is expected to garner a great deal more coverage during the course of the next six months.

China Cracks Down on Energy Futures Speculation

Chinese authorities moved Oct. 20 to curb speculation on the Zhengzhou Commodity Exchange, acknowledging that "The current [coal] price increase has completely deviated from the fundamentals of supply and demand." As a result, coal prices plunged by the maximum of 8% for two days in a row.

On Oct. 19, China's top economic planning body, the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), convened a meeting of key coal producers, the industry association, and the China Electricity Council to study ways and means to intervene. "Price moves of thermal coal futures since the start of the year were analyzed at the symposium, which concluded with a stern crackdown on malicious speculative bets on thermal coal futures," *Global Times* reported. A daily maximum change of 10% in the price was announced. After this series of "policy combinations punches" was issued, the capital market moved in response, and the coal futures market and the stock market fell simultaneously.

At the NDRC meeting, it was reported that since the end of September a new round of coal mines has been approved, increasing average daily output by more than 1.2 million tons from September. Daily output on Oct. 18 exceeded 11.6 million tons, a high for this year. Coal storage has also been increased by more than 9 million tons since the be-

ginning of the month.

Also addressing the issue at a meeting of financial experts on Oct. 20, Guo Shuqing, Chairman of the China Banking and Insurance Regulatory Commission, while repeating the usual shibboleths about the need to reduce dependence on carbon, also warned that such moves cannot be "divorced from reality" and people should not "blindly follow the trend." There is no "one size fits all" solution to the problem, he said.

Russian, Chinese Ships Transit Tsugaru Strait for Joint Patrol in the Pacific

Russian and Chinese ships, after completing their Joint Sea 2021 exercise in the Sea of Japan, on Oct. 18 passed through the Tsugaru Strait between Japan's Hokkaido and Honshu Islands into the Pacific Ocean, in the first Russian-Chinese joint maritime patrol, which hostile western experts said could encircle Japan or approach the U.S. The flotilla consisted of five ships from each navy.

The Tsugaru Strait is only 12 miles (19 km) wide at its narrowest point but, according to a 2009 report in the *Japan Times*, Japan claims territorial waters only 3 miles (5.6 km) into the strait instead of the usual 12 miles (22.2 km). That was done, apparently, to make the Strait international waters, in order to allow U.S. Navy ships carrying nuclear weapons to pass through during the Cold War without violating Japan's prohibition of nuclear weapons on its territory.

The current passage was no doubt

also meant to send a clear message to the new Japanese government, which has begun, under pressure from the Anglo-American powers, to take a greater interest in the Taiwan independence issue.

Harvard Relocates Summer Language Program from Beijing to Taipei

In a snub to China, Harvard University's China Department has decided to move its China Abroad intensive summer language program from Beijing to Taipei in 2022. The university says that the move had been pre-planned and that the reason was an increasingly unfriendly response from their counterparts at the university where the students were housed. One of the "perceived lack of friendliness" issues cited was that the Beijing Language and Culture University wouldn't let the American students celebrate the Fourth of July as they usually did, singing the National Anthem and eating pizza. Harvard attributes the attitude (correctly) to a worsening climate in U.S.-China relations.

The Harvard statement said, "We hope to lay a solid Chinese foundation for the outstanding Harvard students in NTU's [National Taiwan University] free academic atmosphere," indicating that there may be more involved in the decision than is said.

Taiwan was ecstatic over the move, which they see as profiling the island as a "center of Chinese culture." Before the establishment of U.S.-China relations, any American wanting to study Chinese abroad would go to Taipei. But Harvard has had a good relationship with the People's Republic of China in recent years, and the president of Harvard was received by President Xi Jinping last year. Harvard still maintains a center in Shanghai.

China's Commemoration of 1911 Revolution Highlights Rejuvenation and Reunification with Taiwan

The 110th anniversary of the 1911 Xinhai Revolution that ended the imperial system in China under Dr. Sun Yatsen's leadership was widely celebrated on Oct. 9 with a commemoration event at Beijing's Great Hall of the People, where President Xi Jinping addressed the subject with a giant portrait of Dr. Sun Yatsen, the founder of modern China, displayed on the wall:

"The Chinese communists are the most steadfast supporters, most loyal collaborators, and most loyal successors of Dr. Sun Yatsen's revolutionary cause. The Communist Party of China put forward the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal democratic revolution program at the beginning of its establishment, and worked hand in hand with the Chinese Kuomintang led by Mr. Sun Yatsen to help the Kuomintang complete the reorganization, establish the most extensive revolutionary united front, setting off a vigorous revolution and putting up resistance to the northern war lords."

Xi also noted that the notion of China's "rejuvenation," now a leitmotif of the present policy of the Communist Party of China, was first raised by Dr. Sun. President Xi underlined the commitment of the Chinese government to work for the reunification between the mainland and Taiwan. He warned: "The greatest obstacle to rejuvenation is Taiwan independence. Those who forget their ancestors, betray the motherland, or split the country, will never end well." He also warned that China would brook no foreign interference in relations with Taiwan.

Biden's Lack of Ambiguity on Taiwan Could Portend Future Conflict

President Joe Biden has not always been careful with his words, and he really went off script in reply to a question by CNN's Anderson Cooper at a Town Hall meeting on Oct. 22, as to whether the U.S. would come to the aid of Taiwan if it were attacked. Biden said, "Yes, we have a commitment to do that."

But there is no official basis for that assertion. The U.S. has no mutual defense treaty with Taiwan, which the United States does not even recognize as a country. Just the opposite is the case. According to the basic agreements with China when diplomatic relations with the People's Republic were first established, the U.S. agreed *not* to recognize Taiwan as a country. The U.S. does, however, have a commitment under the Taiwan Relations Act to provide the island with defense equipment that would enable it to fend off any unprovoked attack. But were Taiwan to declare its independence from the PRC and the People's Liberation Army were to attack, there is *no* legally binding commitment on the part of the U.S. to get involved.

Immediately responding to the danger involved in Biden's remarks, both the White House and the Defense Department issued statements saying that U.S. policy toward Taiwan had not changed. But with the U.S. still reportedly having military advisers in Taiwan and visits from the U.S. becoming ever more "official," Chinese leaders, who may well overlook a "slip of the tongue" by Joe Biden, will have a difficult time overlooking any changes on the ground in U.S. Taiwan policy.