

CLAWS Newsletter



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➤ POLITICS

17 March 2025 | **China accuses 4 Taiwanese of [cyberattacks](#) and disinformation:** China's Ministry of State Security published the names and photographs of members of Taiwan defence ministry's Information, Communications and Electronic Force Command (ICEFCOM), accusing them of conducting cyberattacks against China and spreading fake news since at least 2023.

26 March 2025 | **China [briefs](#) foreigners on anti-espionage law:** In a first of its kind move, China's Ministry of State Security briefed German diplomats and business community on the revised anti-espionage law. According to the ministry, the presentation was part of its efforts to "foster a market-driven and rule-of-law, internationally friendly business environment."

➤ MILITARY

23 March 2025 | **PLA Deploys Domestic [AI Tool](#) 'DeepSeek' for Military Support Roles:** China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) has begun integrating the domestic AI tool *DeepSeek* into its non-combat support systems, with a focus on military hospitals. The AI is being used to assist doctors in formulating treatment plans, with deployments confirmed in key facilities such as the PLA General Hospital in Beijing and the Central Theatre Command's general hospital. Authorities have stressed that patient data is stored and processed locally to ensure data security. The AI is also in use by the People's Armed Police (PAP) and national defence mobilization units for tasks like physical training and psychological counselling. While the PLA maintains that AI should complement, not replace, human judgment in operations, recent state media coverage suggests growing institutional enthusiasm for AI integration in military planning and battlefield intelligence. This reflects a strategic push by the PLA toward "intelligentization" of warfare, but it also raises questions about the balance between technological dependence and human oversight in high-stakes decision-making. Notably, *DeepSeek* has gained attention for its efficiency and has overtaken ChatGPT as the most downloaded free app on Apple's App Store, signaling China's ambition to domestically rival Western AI platforms across both civilian and military domains.

26 March 2025 | **China-Thailand [Blue Strike-2025](#) Joint Naval Training Kicks Off in Zhanjiang:** The China-Thailand Blue Strike-2025 joint naval training officially commenced on March 26, with the arrival of the Thai naval taskforce at a military port in Zhanjiang City, Guangdong Province. This marks the sixth edition of the training series, which aims to strengthen the naval cooperation between the two nations. The training, set to take place in the waters and airspace around Zhanjiang from late March to early April, will focus on enhancing joint defensive operations. The Thai contingent includes the landing platform dock ship *Angthong* (LPD-791), guided-missile frigates *Kraburi* (FFG-457) and *Chao Phraya* (FFG-455), and offshore patrol vessel *Prachuap Khiri Khan* (OPV-552). Meanwhile, China's taskforce consists of the guided-missile destroyer *Kunming* (Hull 172), amphibious dock landing ship *Qilianshan* (Hull 985), guided-missile frigates *Xuchang* (Hull 536) and *Tianmen* (Hull 631), along with the comprehensive submarine rescue ship *Xiangyanghu* (Hull 832), shipborne helicopters, and Marines Corps personnel.

27 March 2025 | **SCO [military meeting](#) held in east China's Qingdao:** From 26 to 27 March, Qingdao hosted the first meeting of the International Military Cooperation Organs of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Member States for 2025. Organised by China's Ministry of National Defence, the meeting brought together over 30 delegates from SCO member states and the SCO Secretariat. According to Chinese defence spokesperson Wu Qian, the discussions centered on deepening defence and security coordination under the SCO framework and preparing for the upcoming Defence Ministers' Meeting, also to be held in China.

1 April 2025 | **PLA Conducts [Combat Drills](#) Around Taiwan as Tensions Rise:** The Eastern Theater Command of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) has initiated large-scale combat drills around Taiwan Island, deploying a wide range of military forces including ground, naval, air, and rocket units from multiple directions. These [exercises](#), which include sea-air combat-readiness patrols, strikes on sea and ground targets, and blockades on key areas and sea routes, are designed to assess the PLA's joint operational capabilities. Senior Colonel Shi Yi of PLA emphasized that the drills serve as a stern warning against "Taiwan independence". This presumably is a response to the March 13 Lai speech, which greatly angered Beijing. The drills, which will see China's armed forces "[close in](#)" on Taiwan from "multiple directions," mainly focus on sea-air combat-readiness patrols, joint seizure of comprehensive superiority, assault on maritime and ground targets, and blockade on key areas and sea lanes to test joint operations capabilities of China's troops, the People's Liberation Army's Eastern Theater Command said

in a statement on [social media](#). The PLA Eastern Theater Command posted [3 videos](#) about the exercise on Weibo.

➤ FOREIGN AFFAIRS

25 March 2025 | **China Courts Europe as [Portuguese Foreign Minister](#) Visits Beijing Amid Trade Tensions:** During a high-level meeting in Beijing on March 25, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with his Portuguese counterpart Paulo Rangel, calling for deeper China-Europe ties and affirming Beijing's support for Europe's strategic autonomy amid growing global trade tensions. Wang emphasized that China views Europe as a key pole in a multipolar world and expressed readiness to work with Portugal to promote broader Chinese-European cooperation. Rangel's visit, the first by a senior Portuguese official in over five years, comes as the EU grapples with the prospect of trade conflict with both Washington and Beijing, spurring mutual recalibration between European capitals and China. Portugal, a key European signatory to China's Belt and Road Initiative and a beneficiary of Chinese investments in sectors like electric vehicles, has taken a notably softer stance on trade restrictions, including abstaining from last year's EU vote on Chinese EV tariffs. The engagement underscores a strategic balancing act: as U.S. protectionism strains transatlantic ties, China is leveraging bilateral relationships with EU members like Portugal to undercut a unified Western front and anchor its position in the evolving multipolar order.

31 March 2025 | **China Reaffirms ['No Limits' Ties](#) with Russia Amid Ukraine Peace Talk Uncertainties:** During a high-level three-day visit to Moscow starting March 31, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi reiterated that China and Russia are "friends forever, never enemies," underscoring the enduring nature of their "no limits" strategic partnership declared in February 2022. In an interview with Russia's RIA state news agency, Wang emphasized that the principle serves as a "solid legal basis" for deepening cooperation, particularly in the face of global instability. He welcomed recent signs of thawing U.S.-Russia relations under President Donald Trump, calling it a positive shift that could stabilize major power dynamics. Wang dismissed theories suggesting a U.S. attempt to pit Russia against China, condemning such views as outdated bloc thinking. Speaking on Ukraine, Wang acknowledged modest but meaningful progress in ceasefire negotiations, stressing that peace requires sustained effort and compromise. He reiterated China's readiness to facilitate a comprehensive and binding settlement acceptable to all sides, reflecting Beijing's broader push for global diplomatic influence. China's diplomatic posture here underscores a realist calculus: while reinforcing

multipolarity through strategic convergence with Russia, it simultaneously positions itself as a peace broker to challenge Western-led norms and sustain leverage in Eurasian geopolitics.

31 March 2025 | **China, Japan, and South Korea Seek [Economic Coordination](#) Amid U.S. Tariff Pressures:** In their first trilateral economic dialogue in five years held on 30 March, China, Japan, and South Korea aimed to enhance regional trade cooperation and supply chain stability amid rising U.S. tariff threats under President Donald Trump. A Chinese state media-linked Weibo account claimed the three countries agreed to jointly respond to U.S. tariffs, a characterization South Korea called "somewhat exaggerated" and Japan outright denied, stating that the meeting was merely an exchange of views. Despite these differing accounts, all three nations affirmed their intent to strengthen cooperation on supply chains and accelerate negotiations for a China-Japan-South Korea free trade agreement to safeguard regional economic integration. Beijing expressed interest in importing chip products from Japan and South Korea, while Tokyo and Seoul seek Chinese semiconductor raw materials, highlighting mutual economic interdependence. The episode reveals both convergence and caution—while the three powers explore collective economic resilience against external pressures, lingering mistrust and geopolitical sensitivities continue to constrain overt strategic alignment, reinforcing East Asia's fragmented multipolarity.

➤ ECONOMY

28 March 2025 | **Xi Jinping Courts Global CEOs Amid Escalating U.S. [Tariffs and Investor Uncertainty](#):** In a high-profile meeting on March 28 with around 40 multinational CEOs, Chinese President Xi Jinping urged global business leaders to safeguard industrial and supply chain stability, as Beijing seeks to counter mounting concerns over the health of its economy and rising geopolitical risks. Addressing executives from firms such as FedEx, AstraZeneca, Toyota, Mercedes-Benz, and Saudi Aramco, Xi pledged that China would act on the challenges facing foreign enterprises, acknowledging their vital contribution to China's economy—accounting for a third of its trade and over 30 million jobs. The meeting, which follows a steep 27.1% drop in foreign direct investment in 2024, underscores China's strategic use of business diplomacy to restore investor confidence amid fears of renewed trade warfare

under U.S. President Donald Trump. With Washington set to impose fresh tariffs on April 2, Xi framed U.S.-China economic ties as “mutually beneficial,” while cautioning against the zero-sum logic driving current U.S. policy. The gathering highlights a realist recalibration in China’s external engagement, leveraging global capital to offset strategic containment, even as systemic asymmetries and regulatory unpredictability continue to deter long-term investor commitment.

31 March 2025 | **China [Halts \\$23 Billion](#) Global Port Sale Amid U.S. Strategic Pushback:**

Beijing has stalled a \$22.8 billion deal involving the sale of 43 global port facilities including key ports at both ends of the Panama Canal to a consortium led by U.S. investment giant BlackRock, following U.S. President Donald Trump’s public concern over China’s influence on strategic maritime chokepoints. The sale, originally announced by Hong Kong-based conglomerate CK Hutchison on March 4, has now been frozen after China’s State Administration for Market Regulation launched an anti-monopoly investigation, catching both Chinese officials and global investors off guard. The timing, just ahead of China’s critical “two sessions” political summit, and the symbolic importance of the Panama Canal to both U.S. and Chinese commercial and geopolitical interests, has amplified tensions. An op-ed in the pro-Beijing *Ta Kung Pao* condemned the deal as a “betrayal of all Chinese people,” highlighting Beijing’s sensitivity to perceived erosion of strategic assets. President Trump, in turn, touted the stalled deal as a victory for U.S. interests and reaffirmed his intent to assert American dominance over global trade corridors. This episode underscores the blurred lines between China’s private sector and state policy, revealing how Beijing’s geopolitical calculus overrides commercial rationality—especially when vital sea lanes and symbolic sovereignty are at stake in the intensifying U.S.-China rivalry.

31 March 2025 | **China’s [State Banks](#) Launch Massive Capital Raises to Boost Private**

Sector Lending: In a sweeping move to shore up economic stability, four of China’s largest state-owned banks, including China Construction Bank, Bank of China, Bank of Communications, and Postal Savings Bank, announced plans on March 31 to raise a combined 520 billion yuan (\$71.6 billion) through private placements, with direct participation from the Finance Ministry. The move comes as China Construction Bank separately pledged on April 1 to provide no less than 8 trillion yuan (\$1.10 trillion) in financing to the private sector by 2027, reflecting Beijing’s push to revitalize its domestic economy amid sluggish growth and persistent property sector woes. These capital injections aim to bolster core Tier-1 capital, enabling banks to lend more aggressively and stabilize the real economy, particularly as flat

profits, narrow margins, and looming interest rate cuts threaten financial sector resilience. The scale and coordination of these capital raises signal a realist interventionist strategy—Beijing is prioritizing financial system fortification over short-term profitability to preserve macroeconomic stability and reinforce state-led economic governance amid external and internal headwinds.



About the Editors

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