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* China Fortnightly, a segment of the CLAWS Newsletters, offers a concise overview of key developments in China, blending sharp analysis with expert insights.

Internal Politics & Society

This fortnight in early January 2026 highlighted Beijing's strategic pivot toward the 15th Five-Year Plan, emphasising "high-quality development" through innovation, green initiatives, and global outreach while reinforcing Party control via ideological, organisational, and anti-corruption measures. Xi Jinping's New Year address set an optimistic tone on modernisation milestones, AI advancements, and international cooperation, amid subtle efforts to project resilience against external pressures. Senior party officials like Li Qiang and Cai Qi focused on regional innovation hubs and ideological consolidation, reflecting a drive for unified implementation. Anti-corruption campaigns intensified scrutiny on officials and sectors, signalling ongoing purges to eliminate internal threats. These developments illustrate a calculated blend of economic ambition and central tightening, potentially masking vulnerabilities in sustained growth and global influence.

01 Jan (State Council): CPC General Secretary and China's President **Xi Jinping delivered his New Year address**, reflecting on 2025's completion of the 14th Five-Year Plan and outlining directives for "high-quality development" under the 15th Plan, including deepening reforms, innovation in AI with calls for a World AI Cooperation Organization, green commitments like 7-10% emission reductions by 2035, and global initiatives such as the Global Governance Initiative at the SCO summit. This narrative projects confidence in China's trajectory, yet underscores a defensive posture against decoupling risks by prioritising self-reliant tech and controlled openness.

05 Jan (China Media Project): CPC Standing Committee member, also Secretariat member, **Cai Qi, addressed a National Propaganda Ministers Work Conference**, stressing national strategy for media and ideological guarantees for national rejuvenation via Chinese modernisation, focusing on disseminating

Party theories, guiding public opinion, promoting socialist core values, advancing cultural industries, and enhancing global communication to portray a multidimensional China. Publicity Department head Li Shulei outlined implementation tasks with responsibility. This push for cultural and ideological alignment reveals Beijing's strategy to counter narrative challenges, embedding propaganda tools within modernisation goals to sustain domestic legitimacy amid international scrutiny.

05 Jan (State Council): Chinese Premier Li Qiang, during a Guangdong inspection, urged consolidating innovation-driven growth in the Shenzhen-Hong Kong sci-tech zone and Greater Bay Area, emphasising policy support for funding, talent, and application scenarios in emerging tech like low-altitude economy, while in Foshan he called for studying consumer demands to foster high-quality products and virtuous demand-supply cycles, plus expanding high-standard opening via cross-border e-commerce and green trade. This regional focus highlights efforts to leverage southern hubs for breakthroughs, though it subtly prioritises state-directed integration over organic market dynamics to navigate economic headwinds.

06 Jan (General Office of the State Council): The Decree No. 827 was released on commercial mediation regulations, effective May 1, 2026 signed by Premier Li Qiang (full text in link), covering disputes in trade, finance, IP, and more, with judicial departments guiding nationwide and local work, while cultivating international mediation organisations for cross-border activities and exchanges. This framework aims to resolve disputes efficiently and protect rights, signalling an intent to bolster business environments, yet it embeds state oversight in dispute resolution to align commercial activities

with Party priorities amid rising trade frictions.

06 Jan (China Daily): Vice Premier Zhang Guoqing, during an Inner Mongolia research trip, called for accelerating industrial innovation by integrating tech and industry chains, developing new quality productive forces locally, and strengthening product quality supervision, while visiting enterprises in new power systems and biotech, urging intelligent, green transformations and food safety oversight. This emphasis on regional adaptation underscores Beijing's push for balanced development, but reflects a top-down approach to enforce standards, potentially stifling local initiative in pursuit of centralised quality control.

08 Jan (Xinhua): CPC General Secretary **Xi Jinping presided** over a Political Bureau Standing Committee meeting hearing **work reports from leading Party groups of the NPC, State Council, CPPCC, Supreme Court, Procuratorate, and the Secretariat**, commending 2025 advancements while stressing Party leadership as fundamental for Chinese modernization amid complex changes, urging focus on 15th Plan tasks, public interests, and rigorous self-governance. This ritualistic review reinforces hierarchical accountability, illustrating a mechanism to consolidate power and preempt deviations in a period of strategic uncertainty.

09 Jan (State Council): Premier **Li Qiang chaired a State Council executive meeting** deploying **fiscal-financial policies** to boost demand, including loan interest subsidies for services, SMEs, and consumption to expand high-quality supply and private investment, plus providing basic services based on residence to address migrant concerns in education and healthcare; it also approved nature reserve regulation revisions. These measures aim to stimulate internal cycles,

yet they highlight reactive adjustments to sluggish demand, prioritising state incentives over structural reforms to sustain growth momentum.

12 Jan (CPPCC): CPC General Secretary Xi Jinping addressed the 20th Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) fifth plenary, calling for rigorous Party self-governance with higher standards, confining power institutionally, and unrelenting anti-corruption to support 15th Plan goals, noting grave ongoing challenges and urging innovative detection of new corruption forms, stronger oversight coordination, and a loyal disciplinary force; CCDI Secretary Li Xi delivered the work report. Attended by top leaders like Li Qiang and Zhao Leji, this session underscores anti-graft as a perpetual struggle, strategically masking purges as systemic purification to maintain elite cohesion.

14 Jan (Xinhua): Premier Li Qiang chaired a State Council leading Party group meeting studying **Xi Jinping's CCDI speech** and plenum principles, acknowledging 2025 clean government achievements and urging sustained efforts in 2026 for a strong 15th Plan start, focusing on key corruption-prone areas and guarding against hidden forms. Attended by Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang, this alignment session illustrates bureaucratic synchronisation with central anti-corruption rhetoric, prioritising symptom-root treatment to embed loyalty amid economic pressures.

15 Jan (Xinhua): CPC Standing Committee member Cai Qi addressed organisation department heads, stressing high-quality Party organisational development for a solid 15th Plan start, including refining implementation mechanisms for central decisions, correcting performance evaluations, proper official selection, priority to emerging sectors, and talent

cultivation; Organisation Department head Shi Taifeng urged political strengthening and local leadership transitions. This focus on cadre management reveals an intent to streamline hierarchies, ensuring ideological conformity and efficiency in executing top-down agendas.

Security & Defence

This fortnight showcased the PLA's military advancements and assertive posturing, with introductions of new insignias, upgraded stealth fighters, unmanned transport planes, and enhanced naval assets amid joint exercises and export controls. Beijing imposed dual-use export bans on Japan, citing security concerns, while issuing warnings on Tokyo's nuclear ambitions, reflecting heightened tensions in East Asia. Maritime exercises with selective BRICS countries and branding it as the BRICS initiative and navigation warnings in the Bohai Sea underscored interoperability and territorial enforcement. These activities highlight China's push for technological self-reliance and strategic deterrence, potentially escalating regional arms races while projecting defensive narratives to mask expansionist intents.

01 Jan (MND): The People's Liberation Army introduced new sleeve insignias for its four strategic arms—Aerospace Force, Cyberspace Force, Information Support Force, and Joint Logistics Support Force—based on the PLA's August 1st flag with golden-ratio structure, distinctive main colours, and auxiliary stripes for each arm. This update aligns with existing flags for the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Rocket Force. Such symbolic enhancements signal ongoing institutional reforms, yet they primarily serve to bolster internal cohesion and project a unified, modernised force image amid persistent capability gaps in contested domains.

02 Dec (PLA Daily): The PLA Navy commissioned the Type 052D guided-missile destroyer Loudi (Hull 176) in

November 2025, featuring upgraded phased array radar, weapons, and network systems to enhance regional air defence, missile defence, anti-ship strikes, anti-submarine warfare, and formation command. This addition strengthens fleet capabilities in disputed waters. The timing of disclosure underscores Beijing's incremental naval buildup, strategically timed to deter adversaries while downplaying the offensive potential that could intensify South China Sea frictions.

06 Jan (Ministry of Commerce): China's Ministry of Commerce announced strengthened export controls on dual-use items to Japan, prohibiting exports to Japanese military users or purposes enhancing military capabilities, with legal accountability for violators from any region, citing national security, non-proliferation, and response to the Japanese leader's Taiwan remarks. Dual-use items include goods/technologies for civil/military use or weapons of mass destruction. This measure escalates economic coercion, framing it as defensive while potentially disrupting supply chains and signalling readiness to weaponise trade in broader geopolitical rivalries.

07 Jan (MSA): China's Liaoning Maritime Safety Administration (MSA) issued a navigation warning for military exercises in the Bohai Sea from 12:00 January 7 to 18:00 January 8, 2026, declaring relevant waters off-limits. This routine alert maintains operational opacity. Such frequent drills normalise PLA presence in strategic chokepoints, subtly asserting control and testing readiness, though they risk miscalculations with neighbouring navies amid unresolved maritime disputes.

09 Jan (PLA Daily): The China Arms Control and Disarmament Association and China Institute of Nuclear Industry Strategy jointly released a report on Japan's nuclear capabilities, warning of

right-wing forces' ambitions to abandon three non-nuclear principles, stockpile 44.4 tons of plutonium by 2024 end, and develop nuclear weapons quickly via advanced fuel cycle, delivery platforms like F-35s and Aegis destroyers, and potential nuclear submarines. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning highlighted the report's analysis of threats to peace and non-proliferation, urging international vigilance against Japanese military reforms. This accusatory narrative deflects scrutiny from China's own opaque nuclear posture, strategically hyping threats to justify countermeasures and rally global opinion.

11 Jan (Global Times): On the 15th anniversary of the J-20's maiden flight, official media detailed upgrades to the J-20A and J-20S stealth fighters; the J-20A features a raised canopy-fuselage section for reduced drag, better supersonic performance, added equipment/fuel space, upgraded avionics/sensors/engines, enhancing precision strikes and situational awareness; the twin-seat J-20S enables manned-unmanned teaming, electronic jamming, tactical command, and strikes against ground/maritime targets. These revelations tout aviation prowess, but they underscore an accelerating arms race, with dual-seat innovations potentially improving command in multi-domain conflicts while straining resources.

12 Jan (MND): China's Ministry of National Defense announced the "Will for Peace 2026" joint maritime exercise from January 9-16 off Simon's Town, South Africa, involving some selective BRICS members, such as China, Russia, and South Africa under the theme of securing shipping lanes and maritime activities, including counter-terrorism, rescue, anti-sea strikes, communications, maneuvers, hijacked vessel rescues, helicopter transfers, with China's participants being destroyer Tangshan (Hull 122), supply ship Taihu (Hull 889), a helicopter, and special

operations troops; phases include port/shore events and sea drills. India has noted that this exercise is not part of the BRICS framework. This collaboration enhances interoperability, yet it extends Beijing's influence in distant theatres, potentially challenging Western maritime dominance while masking power projection under a multilateral guise.

12 Jan (军武咖: Military Gear): The Tianma 1000 unmanned transport plane, developed by Xi'an Aisheng Technology Group under China North Industries Group Corp, completed its maiden flight in Shaanxi, capable of 8 km altitude, 1,800 km range, <200 m takeoff/landing, 1-ton payload, airdrops, optical-guided landing in low visibility, intelligent loading/unloading in 5 minutes, route planning, obstacle avoidance, fault-tolerant stability, and precise multi-batch airdrops for cargo, delivery, and rescue in plateaus, coasts, mountains. This platform advances logistics autonomy, strategically enabling rapid resupply in remote or contested areas, though it raises concerns over dual-use proliferation in asymmetric warfare scenarios.

External Affairs & Diplomacy

This fortnight underscored Beijing's multifaceted diplomatic manoeuvres, leveraging cultural ties with Europe, economic corridors in the Indian Subcontinent, and multilateral platforms in Africa and BRICS, while condemning US actions and imposing trade measures on Japan. High-level engagements with Pakistan, South Korea, Iran, Laos, Sri Lanka, and Canada emphasised growing mutual interests, amid anti-dumping probes and ambassadorial reshuffles. These efforts project China as a stabilising global actor, yet reveal calculated responses to perceived threats, prioritising influence in the Global South and selective cooperation with rivals to counter containment strategies. The pattern illustrates a blend of assertive sovereignty defence and pragmatic outreach,

potentially masking underlying frictions in bilateral ties.

01 Jan (Xinhua): The China-Nepal Gyirong-Rasuwaqadhi Port resumed customs and passenger clearance after a July 2025 flood destroyed the connecting bridge, with a new temporary steel bridge enabling trade worth 4.25 billion yuan in 2024, accounting for nearly 30% of bilateral volume; opened in 1961 and internationalised in 2017, it allows third-country access. This restoration bolsters Himalayan trade links, strategically enhancing Beijing's connectivity initiatives in Nepal amid regional infrastructure competition. However, it highlights vulnerabilities to natural disasters in sensitive border regions. Such reopenings signal Beijing's commitment to cooperation despite environmental challenges. Overall, this move subtly advances influence in the Indian Subcontinent through infrastructure projects, though it risks escalating geopolitical rivalries over trans-Himalayan projects.

03 Jan (MOFA): China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson remarks on the US military strikes on Venezuela and the removal of President Nicolas Maduro and his wife, labelling it a hegemonic violation of international law, sovereignty, and UN Charter principles, threatening Latin American peace, and urging US compliance. This rhetoric positions Beijing as a defender of sovereignty against perceived imperialism. The statement reflects a broader strategy to criticise US unilateralism in global forums. By highlighting threats to regional security, it aims to rally support from developing nations. Such condemnations often serve to deflect attention from China's own assertive foreign policies. The focus on UN principles underscores Beijing's selective adherence to multilateral norms. Ultimately, this response amplifies anti-Western narratives, strategically fostering alliances in the Global South while avoiding direct confrontation.

04 Jan (MOST): The China-BRICS New Quality Productive Forces Research Center opened in Beijing under the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST), focusing on joint studies, sci-tech innovation, talent training, and policy support for shared prosperity among BRICS states; Vice Minister Chen Jiachang highlighted it as a driver for inclusive development and a shared future. This platform promotes technological collaboration within the BRICS framework. It emphasises applied research in emerging productive forces to deepen mutual benefits. By providing intellectual support for policies, it strengthens BRICS as an alternative to Western-led institutions. Such initiatives reflect Beijing's push for multipolar innovation ecosystems. In essence, this launch strategically counters tech decoupling by fostering dependencies among emerging economies.

04 Jan (China Daily): Chinese Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang met Pakistani Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar in Beijing, emphasising iron-clad friendship, leader consensus from 2025, political trust, development synergy, and coordination on global issues; Dar reaffirmed the all-weather partnership on the 75th diplomatic anniversary. This meeting reinforces longstanding strategic bonds between the two nations. The emphasis on mutual support highlights core interest alignments. Such engagements prioritise CPEC as a flagship of connectivity. Overall, this dialogue subtly advances Beijing's influence in the Indian Subcontinent through enduring alliances, though it navigates regional power dynamics carefully.

05 Jan (Xinhua): Joint Press Communiqué of the Seventh China-Pakistan Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue, co-chaired by Wang Yi and Mohammad Ishaq Dar, issued a

communiqué on implementing the 2025-2029 Action Plan for a closer shared future, reaffirming mutual support on core issues, which mentions Tibet, implying India's Arunachal Pradesh and Pakistan's sovereignty; they committed to anti-terrorism, upgraded CPEC 2.0, space cooperation including Pakistani astronauts in China's station, peaceful Jammu-Kashmir resolution per UN resolutions, and trilateral mechanisms with Afghanistan and Bangladesh. This dialogue aimed at cementing comprehensive strategic alignment across multiple domains. The action plan guides future bilateral priorities with a focus. Although reaffirmations on territorial integrity underscore zero-tolerance for external interference, the Jammu-Kashmir stance invokes international law selectively.

05 Jan (MOFA): China's President Xi Jinping held talks with South Korean President Lee Jae Myung in Beijing, witnessing 15 cooperation documents in sci-tech, ecology, transport, and trade; it was aimed at continuity in policy, mutual benefit in AI, green industries, silver economy, and contributions to regional peace amid 15th Plan opportunities. This summit marks a positive shift in bilateral dynamics. Economic interdependence drives focus on interwoven supply chains. Regional peace emphasis navigates alliance pressures. Essentially, this engagement pragmatically mitigates tensions, leveraging complementarities to manage broader rivalries.

07 Jan (观察者网): Foreign Minister Wang Yi visited Ethiopia, Somalia, Tanzania, and Lesotho from January 7-12, and attended the China-Africa People-to-People Exchanges Year launch at the AU headquarters. It is the 70th China-Africa diplomatic anniversary and a 36-year tradition of Africa as the first annual visit, aiming to deepen trust, implement FOCAC outcomes, and build an all-weather shared future. This itinerary

upholds longstanding diplomatic traditions. The exchange year focuses on cultural and people ties. Visits to strategic partners enhance political mutual understanding. Forum on China-Africa Cooperation implementation drives infrastructure and development projects. The new all-weather community concept emphasises resilience and reordering due to the rivalry with the US. In practice, this sustains African influence through consistent engagement, countering rival powers.

07 Jan (MPS): State Councillor and Public Security Minister Wang Xiaohong met Pakistan's Interior and Narcotics Control Minister Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi, committing to anti-terrorism efforts, combating telecom fraud, securing Chinese personnel and projects, and building law enforcement capacities to foster a closer shared future. This engagement spotlights persistent security vulnerabilities in bilateral relations amid regional issues. Multi-level exchanges seek to enhance coordination, though effectiveness remains uncertain. Fraud crackdowns address transnational issues, yet implementation challenges persist. Project protections prioritise CPEC assets, reflecting Beijing's focus on safeguarding economic interests. Joint risk management highlights mutual dependencies in unstable environments. This underscores China's strategic imperative to mitigate threats to its overseas ventures, potentially reinforcing influence through security pacts while navigating Pakistan's internal complexities.

08 Jan (IDCPC): CPC International Department head Liu Haixing met Iranian Expediency Discernment Council member Ali Agha Mohammadi, advisor to Iran's Supreme Leader, to discuss implementing leader consensuses, deepening economic and political exchanges, and advancing bilateral relations amid Tehran's domestic unrest and heightened US scrutiny following

Washington's strikes on Venezuela. This party-to-party dialogue reinforces alternative channels amid Iran's recent protests over economic hardships and governance issues. Consensus execution prioritises pragmatic ties, potentially channelling Chinese support to stabilise regimes. Exchanges span critical sectors, aiming for resilient partnerships against sanctions. The advisor's role underscores high-stakes alignment with Iran's leadership. Such engagements subtly counter external isolations, including US pressures linking Iran to proxy networks post-Venezuela actions. This meeting strategically navigates West Asia volatilities, bolstering bonds while exposing dependencies on authoritarian solidarities.

12 Jan (State Council): President Xi Jinping appointed new ambassadors: Jing Quan to the Philippines, Shen Bo to the Netherlands, Jiang Wei to Antigua and Barbuda, Li Xiang to Mali, Yang Xin to Kuwait, Zhao Yong to Sierra Leone, Kang Yan to Slovenia, Yang Yirui to Portugal, and Jia Guide to UN Geneva. This reshuffle refreshes key diplomatic postings. Appointments span Asia, Europe, Africa, and multilateral hubs. Such changes adapt to evolving international landscapes. In effect, this bolsters Beijing's worldwide representation amid shifting alliances.

12 Jan (MOFA): Foreign Minister Wang Yi met Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Vijitha Herath during a Sri Lanka stopover post-Africa, offering cyclone aid, pledging governance exchanges, practical cooperation, people-to-people ties; Wang emphasised safeguarding developing countries' rights, opposing power politics, supporting Sri Lanka's path, and South Asia-oriented regional cooperation; Herath thanked the aid, and sought infrastructure/maritime/tourism/cultural ties. This meeting leverages humanitarian diplomacy effectively. Regional

cooperation orients toward reasonable governance, advancing influence subtly.

13 Jan (PRC Embassy Laos): CPC International Department head Liu Haixing, as Xi Jinping's special envoy, visited Laos to congratulate the 12th LPRP National Congress and **Thongloun Sisoulith's election** as LPRP General Secretary, delivering Xi's letter and message on advancing China-Laos shared future per leader consensus; Thongloun appreciated and pledged elevated ties; Liu talked with LPRP External Relations head Bounleua Phandanouvong. This envoy mission reinforces party-to-party solidarity. Congress congratulations mark ideological alignment. Strategically, this secures Southeast Asian influence through socialist networks.

15 Jan (MOFA): Premier Li Qiang held talks with Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney in Beijing, welcoming turnaround in ties, urging strategic partnership, mutual trust, core respect, strategy alignment, cooperation in clean energy/digital/agriculture/aerospace/manu facturing/finance, trade growth, people-to-people exchanges, and multilateralism; Carney reaffirmed sought mutual respect-based dialogue in economy/energy/green/agriculture; they witnessed documents in trade/customs/energy/construction/culture /security. This premier-level engagement signals relational thaw. Turnaround acknowledgement highlights recent improvements. Document signings formalise practical gains, strategically accessing resources amid rivalries.

Economy, Finance, Trade & Commerce

This fortnight in early January 2026 illustrated Beijing's concerted push to stimulate domestic consumption, advance digital economy foundations, reinforce financial market integrity, and selectively open capital accounts while protecting

strategic sectors. Consumption-boosting measures, including trade-in subsidies and "Shopping in China" campaigns, targeted household demand and inbound tourism amid sluggish recovery pressures. Data governance reforms sought to unlock resources for "Digital China" ambitions, while anti-fraud crackdowns and trade probes signalled heightened regulatory vigilance. International financial forums and cross-border cash pooling are aimed at deepening global integration, yet with controlled institutional safeguards. These initiatives reflect a calculated balancing of short-term demand support against long-term structural controls, potentially masking underlying vulnerabilities in growth sustainability and external dependencies.

03 Jan (State Council): China's National Development and Reform Commission and Ministry of Finance allocated 62.5 billion yuan in ultra-long special treasury bonds to fund 2026 consumer goods trade-in and large-scale equipment renewal programs, offering subsidies like 15% (up to 1,500 yuan) for energy-efficient appliances and 12% (capped at 20,000 yuan) for new energy vehicle replacements, with extensions to digital smart products, elder-friendly items, elevators in old buildings, and elderly care/firefighting equipment. These measures aim to accelerate household upgrades, boost greener demand, and provide manufacturers with order visibility for productivity gains. Foreign executives, including Hubert de Haan of BSH Home Appliances, highlighted market potential in tiered cities and policy-driven consumption upgrades. This fiscal stimulus underscores Beijing's priority on expanding domestic demand per the Central Economic Work Conference, yet it relies heavily on subsidies to counter structural slowdowns in household spending.

03 Jan (China Daily): China Daily launched an international communication platform in Shanghai, comprising one newspaper, website, and

social media accounts on Facebook, X, and TikTok, to promote the "**Shopping in China**" initiative amid the 2026 New Year Consumption Season launch ceremony. Commerce Minister Wang Wentao outlined three themes—goods, services, and new consumption scenarios—with nationwide events like Premium Consumption Month and programs in 15 pilot cities. The platform features sections on Policy Guide, Shopping, Delicacy, Travel, and Events to showcase China's consumer landscape globally. Deputy Editor-in-Chief Liu Weiling emphasised visually engaging content for overseas audiences. This soft power effort seeks to attract inbound tourism and spending, projecting hospitality and economic vitality. It strategically positions China as an open consumption hub, though it navigates global perceptions of economic access amid lingering restrictions.

06 Jan (China Daily): The National Data Administration outlined plans to deepen market-oriented data allocation reforms and build a unified national data market in 2026, including smoothing circulation channels, activating supply-demand dynamics, and fostering an open, secure ecosystem to empower "Digital China". The NDA pledged integration of data with technological and industrial innovation, urban digital transformation, infrastructure development, AI growth, and international cooperation on digital economy rules. This builds on prior digital plans targeting a global forefront status by 2035. Such ambitions reflect Beijing's drive to monetise data as a core asset, yet they entail tight state oversight to mitigate risks in privacy and security. The emphasis on international standards participation signals intent to shape global norms while advancing domestic digital sovereignty.

07 Jan (MOC): The Ministry of Commerce, in Announcement No. 2 of 2026, initiated an anti-dumping investigation into Japanese-origin

dichlorosilane (DCS, SiH_2Cl_2 , tariff 28539090) following a petition by Tangshan Sanfu Electronic Materials alleging rising import volumes and a 31% price decline from 2022 to 2024 that affected domestic producers. The probe covers dumping during July 2024–June 2025 and injury from January 2022–June 2025. DCS is a key upstream material for semiconductor manufacturing, making the case commercially and strategically significant. While the investigation follows standard WTO-consistent procedures, its timing coincides with heightened China–Japan frictions over semiconductor-related export controls. Even in the absence of definitive findings, the inquiry may disrupt established supply relationships, raise costs for downstream users, and encourage import substitution. The case highlights the growing use of trade remedies in technologically sensitive sectors amid intensifying regional competition.

09 Jan (CSRC): Chairman of China Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC), Wu Qing, convened an interdepartmental meeting with the Supreme People's Court, Procuratorate, Ministry of Public Security, People's Bank of China, and others to strengthen coordinated enforcement against financial fraud in listed companies. Participants emphasised tackling long-term, complex misconduct through enhanced regulations, joint actions, and new corporate governance initiatives. Since 2024, the CSRC investigated 159 cases, penalised 111 with 8.1 billion yuan fines, and transferred 112 to the police. This crackdown reflects Beijing's push for market integrity and investor protection amid economic uncertainties. It serves as a tool to discipline corporate behaviour, potentially consolidating regulatory control over capital markets.

12 Jan (China Daily): The National Data Administration, led by Head Liu

Liehong, plans to accelerate a data property rights registration system, drawing on other fields' experiences and soliciting opinions through a recent symposium with the Beijing Internet Court, local authorities, and businesses. This seeks to promote data use and value unlocking. Such institutional innovation underscores efforts to formalise data as an economic resource. It highlights Beijing's cautious approach to balancing innovation with centralised governance in the digital domain.

15 Jan (SAFE): The State Administration of Foreign Exchange, via Capital Account Management Department Head Xiao Sheng, **announced nationwide rollout of centralised cross-border cash management** for medium-sized multinationals, alongside forex reforms for direct and securities investment, including simplified registrations, fund use facilitation, and RMB/foreign currency pooling expansions. These measures support the headquarters economy, outbound investment, and market connectivity. This advances institutional opening under the capital account. It strategically attracts foreign capital and eases global operations while maintaining regulatory safeguards. The policies reflect a controlled liberalisation to bolster financial integration amid external uncertainties.

Science, Technology, Industry & Resources

This fortnight highlighted Beijing's advancements in medical imaging, unmanned aviation, satellite technology, and deep-sea robotics, emphasising self-reliant innovation across civil and strategic applications. A lifespan brain structure study addressed diagnostic gaps for neurological disorders, while the "Taurus" drone demonstrated logistics capabilities in challenging terrains. Multiple satellite launches, including Yaogan-50, low-orbit internet

constellations, and an Algerian remote-sensing satellite, underscored expanding space infrastructure. The undersea drilling robot trial enhanced resource exploration in the South China Sea. These developments reflect a strategic focus on dual-use technologies, potentially bolstering resource security and export potential amid global competition.

04 Jan (母侍): Chinese Version of Brain MRI Benchmarks for Ageing and Disease Detection. A research team led by Professor Liu Ya'ou from Beijing Tiantan Hospital's Radiology Department, in collaboration with Beijing Normal University, established normative brain structure references for Chinese individuals using MRI data from 24,061 healthy participants and 3,932 neurological patients, covering 228 indicators published in *Nature Neuroscience*. This addresses diagnostic challenges from Western-biased norms and distinguishes ageing from pathology, enabling deviation scores for diseases like Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and multiple sclerosis, with clinical pilots at Tiantan Hospital and integrations of multi-modal data. The framework improves accuracy in early screening and treatment. This innovation highlights Beijing's push for population-specific medical standards, strategically reducing reliance on foreign benchmarks while advancing precision diagnostics in a rapidly ageing society.

13 Jan (CNSA): The Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center deployed the Yaogan-50 01 remote sensing satellite using a modified Long March-6 rocket at 10:16 p.m. Beijing Time, entering planned orbit for land surveys, crop estimation, and disaster mitigation, marking China's first 2026 orbital launch and the 624th Long March mission. This routine deployment maintains momentum in Earth observation capabilities. It reflects

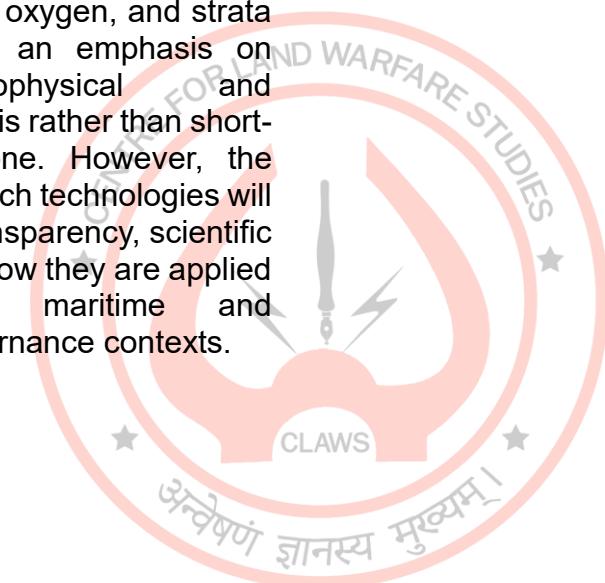
Beijing's sustained investment in satellite constellations, strategically supporting resource management and monitoring while projecting self-reliance in space services amid international dependencies.

13 Jan (China Report): A Long March-8A rocket launched from Hainan commercial site at 11:25 p.m. Beijing Time, placing the 18th group of low-orbit internet satellites into orbit, advancing broadband infrastructure. This mission bolsters constellation buildout for global connectivity. It illustrates Beijing's commercial space ambitions, leveraging cost-effective launches to compete in satellite internet, though it navigates orbital congestion and spectrum allocation challenges.

Jan. 14 (People's Daily): Aerospace Times Feipeng Co. developed the FP-985 "Taurus" large fixed-wing drone, which completed a 1,100 km logistics flight from Nyingchi, Xizang to Beichuan, Sichuan, carrying specialties like butter tea and yak products, with 5.7-ton takeoff weight, over 2-ton payload, 2,000 km range, and adaptations for plateaus/islands including modified engines for high-altitude efficiency. The route cuts transport from 40+ hours by land to under 6 hours, fostering economic links and low-altitude networks in Beichuan's pilot zone. Party chief Li Haotian noted potential for e-commerce growth. This validates plateau logistics, strategically promoting regional integration and prosperity, yet it amplifies dual-use aerial capabilities in sensitive border areas.

15 Jan (Academy of Ocean of China): The Guangzhou Marine Geological Survey under China Geological Survey developed **China's first undersea robot for 3D drilling and in-situ monitoring**. Tested at a depth of 1,264

meters in the South China Sea, the platform reportedly met operational benchmarks related to navigation, drilling stability, and data acquisition. Its modular design, combined with inertial navigation, magnetic beacon positioning, and AI-based path planning, reflects broader global trends toward autonomous systems for deep-ocean exploration. Beyond engineering performance, the system's ability to deploy multiple sensors for long-term, in-situ monitoring has potential implications for marine geology, resource assessment, and environmental baseline studies. The collection of over 2,000 data sets on methane, dissolved oxygen, and strata structure suggests an emphasis on integrated geophysical and geochemical analysis rather than short-term sampling alone. However, the strategic value of such technologies will depend on data transparency, scientific collaboration, and how they are applied within contested maritime and environmental governance contexts.



About the Author

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