



Committee Overview

Two hundred years ago, Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte famously remarked, “China is a sleeping giant. Let her sleep, for when she wakes up she will move the world.”

Welcome to the state council body of the People’s Republic of China. President Xi Jinping has embraced a precedent-breaking third term as president and is counting on this body to lead this country. It is your duty, as Xi Jinping’s trusted advisors in the State Council and the national security apparatus, to help navigate the PRC through not only one of the most transformative and impactful periods in history, but also through the multiple crises that are currently developing.

Abroad, the PRC Government has paid close attention to the international response to the invasion of Ukraine. The West, particularly the U.S., has been galvanized by the situation, which has led to a revitalization of NATO. Beijing considers Moscow a strategic ally, and supporting them will benefit us in the long term, yet we are keen on avoiding further military escalation, particularly when it comes to nuclear measures. Furthermore, the arguments deployed by Russia toward ownership of Ukraine are potentially similar to those of the PRC toward the island of Taiwan. The way in which the West responds to Ukraine may portend how they respond to the eventual reunification of China.

Domestically, President Xi’s third term started with a slate of challenges, in particular when it comes to public obedience. After three years of proving Chinese cultural superiority by enduring stringent anti-COVID-19 measures, protests have erupted across China against the government’s actions to prevent mass contagion. These protests have been unable to be quelled by normal measures. Furthermore, zero COVID policy and a stuttering housing crisis have thrown a wrench in our economic growth. As a new century dawns, it is the responsibility of our State Council to claim it for the Chinese people, leading us to our proper place in history as the center between heaven and earth.

State of the World

The current state of the world is one of turmoil and constant upheaval. Growing conflicts continue to disrupt any sense of normalcy as the People’s Republic of China upholds our mission to protect Chinese people and their interests. The information required to be fully up to date is far too comprehensive to list in its entirety here. Ministers interested in fulfilling their due diligence should refer to the State of the World brief for material related to the overarching themes and conflicts. Notable sections include information regarding the main key states intervening in Chinese foreign policy, multinational organizations, various media organizations, and the main international touchpoints facing the world.

Domestic Issues Facing this Cabinet

Only a few miles from the Forbidden City in Beijing lie the ruins of the Old Summer Palace. It was heralded as one of the most beautiful locations in China before it was razed by an invading coalition of British and French troops. Its destruction occurred near the end of the Opium Wars (fought between 1839-1842 and 1856-1860) and marked a titanic shift in China's attitudes towards the West and its internal development. After centuries of viewing itself as the center of the world, China had been devastated by, from their view, a much smaller and inferior power. In the decades following, defeat would continue to follow defeat, as a vast array of outside empires shattered China in what is now known as its "Century of Humiliation." The explanation for these events is clear and etched into the worldview of every citizen and member of the State Council: China had fallen behind technologically and economically.

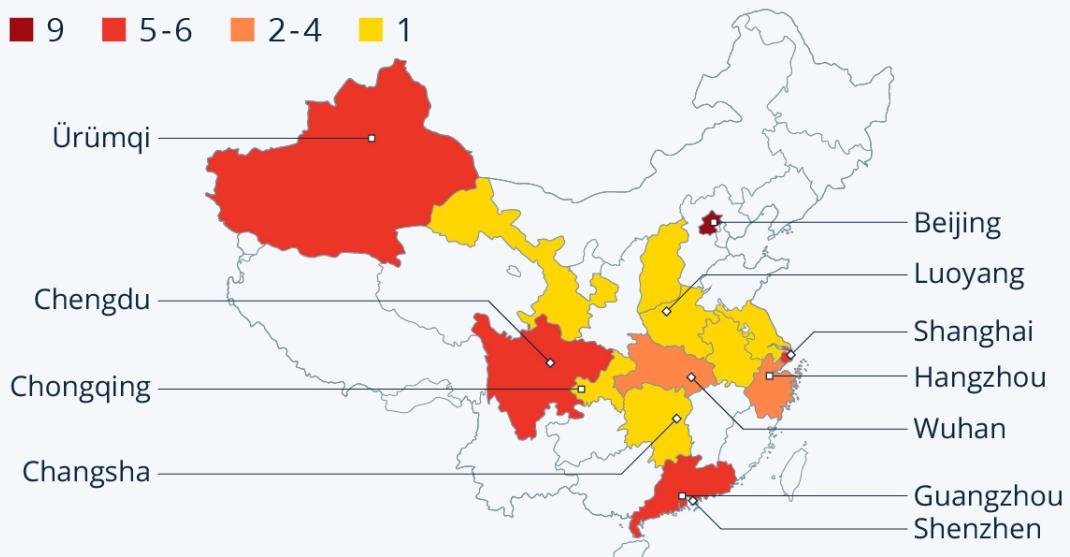
The rhetoric behind this founding myth is powerful and underpins the worldview of modern Chinese leaders. In 1978, Deng Xiaopeng's reforms began the process of opening up the country, spurring decades of continuous economic growth and starting the country on its path to retake what is perceived as its rightful place atop the global pecking order. Consequently, the Chinese leadership sees continuous economic growth as instrumental to maintaining control over the country, taking the place of the Mandate of Heaven of Imperial times. Now, as the economic engine begins to run out of steam, President Xi Jinping is proactively taking steps to increase the power of his regime, in an attempt to maintain control in what are anticipated to be more tumultuous times ahead.



In November 2022, a series of protests exploded across the country representing a critical threat to Chinese stability and opening up China to criticism on the international stage. These protests, which came to be known as the *White Paper Protests*, came about as a result of strict COVID-19-related health measures called zero-COVID policies. zero-COVID policies included putting cities under full or partial lockdowns, introducing district-based controls, banning targeted residents from leaving their homes for any non-medical reason, and pushing mandatory testing and vaccinations.¹ In one particularly infamous incident, people blamed zero-COVID restrictions for delaying rescue efforts after a fire in Xinjiang killed at least 10 people.² These protests spread across multiple cities and multiple regions. The government attempted to use security forces and censorship to push back against the protestors but despite their best efforts, the number of people involved and the frequency of the protests only grew.

Protests Against 'Zero Covid' Policy Spread in China

Number of mass demonstrations and main cities involved in China Nov. 26-28, 2022, by province/autonomous region*



* The protests stem from objections to the strict Covid-related health restrictions maintained by Chinese authorities.

Source: Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI)



statista

¹ [What is China's zero-COVID policy? – DW – 05/09/2022](#)

² [Why Xi Jinping Changed His Mind on “Zero COVID” | The New Yorker](#)

In December 2022, the government responded to the protests with some major concessions. They retreated from their strict zero-COVID politics and eased requirements on testing, quarantines, and lockdowns. In many ways, this was a success for leading protesters across China. There are some clouds on the horizon though. A retreat from the COVID-19 policies does not mean that China has beaten COVID. Many health experts say that the efficacy of the Sinovac vaccine and the sudden pullback in restrictions could lead to major outbreaks across China. Nor does this mean that the protests will automatically cease. Even though the protests started over the zero-COVID policies, they have grown and morphed into a much larger grievance movement. The protesters are pushing for democratic participation in decisions related to the future of the country, for accessibility of jobs and housing, for freedom to protest and to express displeasure without fear of persecution. They don't see China continuing to grow economically in the way that it has over the past decades and they don't see the economic growth trickling down to the populace. They feel like they could lose their jobs, not be able to purchase a house, and not be able to express displeasure or have a voice in the future of the PRC. China's youth in particular is particularly adamant about gaining economic opportunity, freedom of speech, introducing democratic elements into their lives, and pushing what they see as social and political freedom. It will be up to this cabinet to see how to handle this latest threat to the status quo.³

"It could take us five to 10 years or even more," one LGBTQ protester said. "For many of us, we would be satisfied if we could see a free and democratic China in our lifetime."³"

Bloc Positions

One Belt One Road, a success or an opportunity to pivot away?

The Belt Road Initiative (BRI), also called the One Belt One Road (OBOR) Initiative, kicked off in 2013 with promise and ambition. It was going to be the new silk road of the 21st century and would elevate China to the global stage, building links from China to countries in Asia, Europe, Africa, South America, and all across the world. The Belt Road Initiative infrastructure investments included both economic investments like rail, roads, bridges, airports, dams, power stations, and hydroelectric dams as well as military investments like deep-sea ports. The initiative had its proponents and detractors. Proponents lauded the program for bringing funds to countries that didn't have funds available, creating massive opportunities for infrastructure and energy independence for countries like Myanmar, Russia, Sri Lanka, and Egypt. Detractors said that this was a post-colonial form of debt-trapping developing countries. They pointed to projects like the Hambantota port in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka could not pay back the \$1.3 billion port BRI debt and ended up signing over a majority stake in the port to China for 99 years. Detractors also say that the BRI sent funds to earth-harming coal and fossil fuel projects alongside more progressive instruments into solar and renewable energy.

³ ['I Will Keep Fighting': China's Protesters Say It's Bigger Than Covid - The New York Times](#)

During the COVID-19 pandemic, President Xi pushed for a pivot in how the Belt Road Initiative operated. The administration pushed for more investment into public health investments, a focus on quality over quantity of projects, and a strong focus on renewable energy projects instead of fossil fuels. Chinese banks also focused on making sure debt recipients would be able to pay off the loans and sought to move away from the tag of debt-trap diplomacy.

Russia, a useful ally or a dangerous distraction?

The situation in Ukraine has pushed China and Russian interests closer together, providing China the opportunity to purchase energy at below-market pricing and strengthening the economic ties between both countries. There are concerns at the highest level of PRC leadership that China could hurt its international reputation by being seen as being too close to President Putin. Some urge President Xi to pivot to a more diplomatic or mediator role in Ukraine, potentially using the situation to portray an image of responsible global Chinese leadership.

The island of Taiwan, an opportunity or a trap?

After the Chinese Civil War, the Nationalist government fled the mainland and set up a government on the island of Taiwan, now called the Republic of China (ROC). The PRC government has made it a stated priority to reunite Taiwan with the mainland, ideally through peaceful means. Since then, the PRC has had some success isolating Taiwan diplomatically. Crucially, however, the U.S. has sharpened its rhetoric on Taiwan over the past few years, with both President Biden and President Trump skirting the line of violating the One-China policy.

Some in the PRC government would like to see President Xi take a stronger stance against Taiwan's independence, using both diplomatic and military influence to accelerate the process of reunification, while others warn that this could backfire and lead to unintended consequences. In particular, these viewpoints point towards Ukraine as an example of a reunification attempt going wrong. This cabinet will have to decide if and how to change the status quo behavior towards the island of Taiwan.

Building Military Capabilities: is conventional, nuclear, or cyber the right approach?

As PRC has looked outward and towards the international stage, it has had to grapple with questions of military capabilities. It has pumped investments into all facets of military leadership, from the conventional to the high-tech. Naval Chinese military forces have expressed soft and hard power in the South China Sea (SCS) while its nuclear warheads and capabilities are next-gen technology, propelling China to a top-notch nuclear power. China has also taken a playbook from Putin's playbook, strengthening its soft power capability with cyber-offensive, cyber-defensive, and media/messaging capabilities.

Appendices

Key Terms

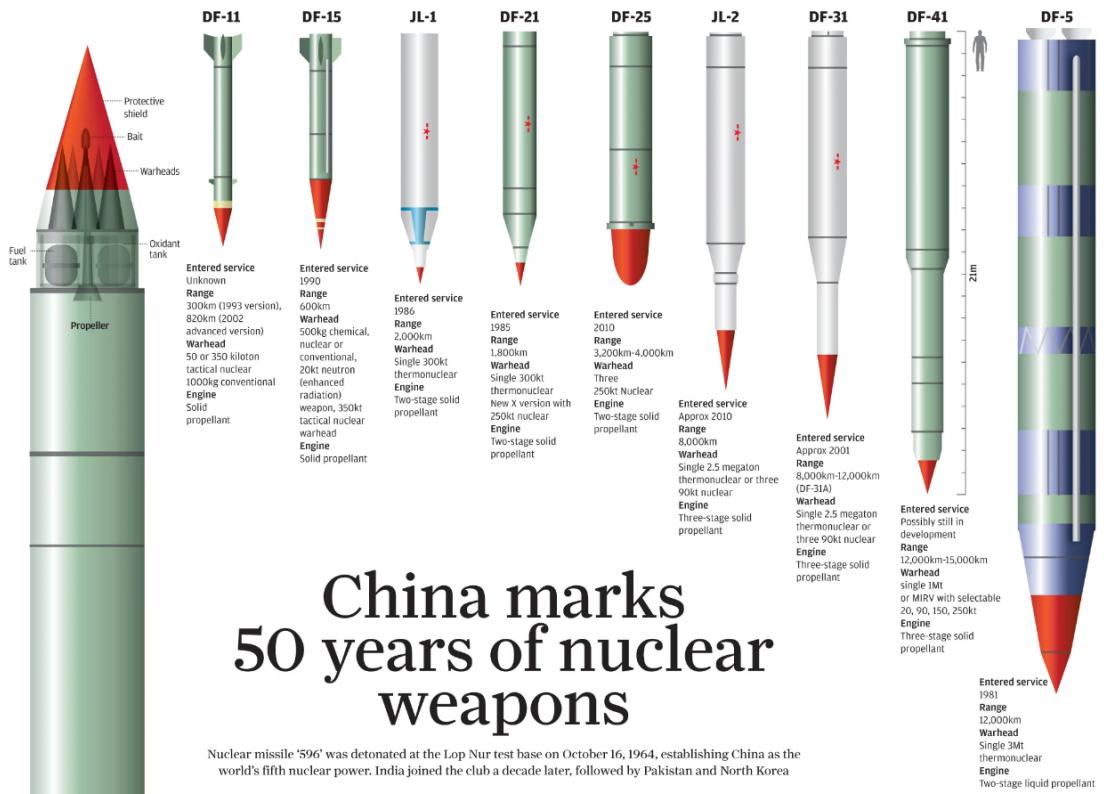
- One Belt One Road (OBOR) or Belt Road Initiative (BRI)
- Chinese Politburo
- Zero-COVID policy
- One-China Policy
- Debt-Trap diplomacy
- White paper protests
- Chinese Communist Party (CCP)
- Build Back Better World (B3W)
- Cold War
- Strategic Nuclear Warhead
- Nuclear Arsenal
- Nuclear Demilitarization
- Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)
- Hybrid and Multi-Facet Conflicts
- Uyghur Muslims
- South China Sea (SCS)
- AUKUS Trilateral Security Partnership

Additional Resources

- Mapping the BRI's Progress: [China's Belt And Road Initiative Opens Up Unprecedented Opportunities](#)
- [US to Offer Alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative](#)
- [Myanmar democracy in new era as Suu Kyi sidelined by army | AP News](#)
- [How Bosnia's Dodik went from a moderate reformist to genocide-denying secessionist](#)
- [The Time for Electoral Reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina is Now | Balkan Insight](#)
- [What's Happening in Belarus? Here Are the Basics. - The New York Times](#)
- [FACT SHEET: President Biden and G7 Leaders Launch Build Back Better World \(B3W\) Partnership | The White House](#)
- [Is China's Belt and Road Initiative a Threat to the US? – The Diplomat](#)
- [The pandemic is hurting China's Belt and Road Initiative | The Economist](#)
- Chinese Nuclear Weapon Program: [China marks 50 years of nuclear weapons](#)
- [Chart: Protests Against 'Zero Covid' Policy Spread in China | Statista](#)
- [Xi Jinping secures historic third term as leader of China](#)
- [Chinese university students sent home amid protests](#)

MAPPING THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE'S PROGRESS

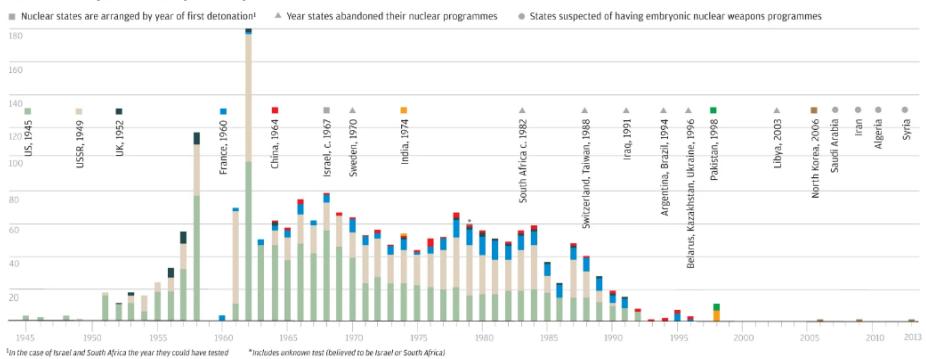




China marks 50 years of nuclear weapons

Nuclear missile '596' was detonated at the Lop Nur test base on October 16, 1964, establishing China as the world's fifth nuclear power. India joined the club a decade later, followed by Pakistan and North Korea

Nuclear weapons tests by country

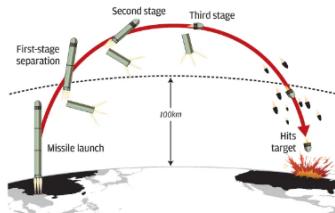


DF-41

China's newest generation of intercontinental ballistic missile is the Dongfeng-41 (East Wind-41). With an estimated intercontinental range between 12,000km and 15,000km this will be one of the world's longest range missiles. The defence ministry responded to reports in January, that it had tested a hypersonic missile delivery vehicle by saying that the experiments were "not targeted at any country and at any specific goals".

Wider reach

The DF-41 allows China to deliver up to 10 nuclear warheads 12,000km away using a single missile.



Global distribution of nuclear weapons



Spending (2011) US dollars

