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The 70th foundation anniversary of China: a telling parade

The 70th anniversary of the foundation of the People's Republic of China was celebrated with a great military parade held in Beijing on the 1st of October. 15.000 troops marched past a large crowd and the nation's top political and military leaders. Quite interestingly, while President Xi Jinping appeared in a grey Mao suit, underlining also physically continuity, political commissars were absent near military commanders in the marching formations.

Xi launched the celebrations with a speech that emphasized China's economic rise and the Communist Party's role in bringing it about. *"There is no force that can undermine the status of this great nation. No force can hinder the ongoing progress of the Chinese people and the Chinese nation"* he said, remembering also the infamous past "century of humiliation", when China was colonised and divided.

President Xi's pronouncements played right to the concerns of cabinet officials in the US administration who assert that China is an aggressive challenger to the system and values of the Western world.

Yet, a few days before the anniversary parade, China's foreign minister, Wang Yi, discredited such concerns in a speech pronounced during a dinner in New York on the side lines of the United Nations General Assembly. *"China-U.S. relations today have once again come to a crossroads,"* he said. *"Some people are using any means to depict China as a major adversary, marketing their prophecy that the relationship is doomed to fall into the Thucydides trap, the clash of civilizations trap, and even clamouring for a full decoupling with China. The truth is that both countries have benefited tremendously from cooperation in the last 40 years"* he argued, adding, *"China has no intention of playing the Game of Thrones on the world stage"*.

On the military side the newest weapon systems were the:

- The road-mobile ICBM Dong Feng (East Wind) DF-41, capable to deliver 10 nuclear re-entry vehicles at a maximum distance of 15.000 (a world record). Nevertheless, the nuclear payload will be typically restricted to three warheads, supported by seven other vehicles acting as decoys and jammers, in order to penetrate the advanced US Ballistic Missile Defence;
- The DF-17 medium-range ballistic missile/hypersonic glide vehicle combination, the first fully operational hypersonic (Mach 5) nuclear and manoeuvrable warhead in the world, making it very difficult to intercept;
- The CJ/DF-100 Cháng Jiàn (Long Sword) hypersonic cruise missile designed to intercept aircraft carriers at 2.000-3.000 km distances;
- Three advanced drones, namely the HSU-001 LDUUV (Large-Displacement Unmanned Underwater Vehicle), probably for autonomous long range submarine recce; and the DR-8 supersonic spy drone and the Hongdu GJ-11 Lijian (Sharp Sword) stealth Unmanned Combat Air Vehicles

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