



## China's Latest "Show of Force" Sparks Concern and Commentary

**OE Watch Commentary:** China recently held a military parade to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. The fifth parade that has passed before President Xi Jinping, it is being touted as "the largest in scale and richest in substance," according to the first article extract from *China Daily*. The parade has drawn global attention as observers strive to comprehend China's growing military capabilities. The three accompanying passages, published in *China Daily*, *South China Morning Post (SCMP)*, and *Agence France Press (AFP)*, discuss the highlights of the parade and provide insight into the significance and perceptions from both the Chinese and the foreign press.

Some of the more noteworthy weapons and military systems rolled out during the parade include several Dongfeng (DF), which translates as "East Wind" series missile systems. These included the DF-17 hypersonic ballistic missile and the DF-41 intercontinental ballistic missile, both of which made their debuts. The DF-17 is a short to medium-range missile that has a hypersonic glide vehicle (HGV) and can deliver both nuclear and conventional payloads, although Chinese sources are highlighting it as a conventional weapon. The advantage of an HGV is its unpredictable trajectory, making it extremely difficult to counter. The DF-41 is believed to have the longest range - over 7,500 miles - and is described as "the mainstay of China's strategic nuclear strength." Both of these missiles demonstrate significant advances in military innovation for China.

China also showcased a host of other missiles, drones, and tanks and its main military branches, along with the newly established PLA Strategic Support Force and PLA Joint Logistic Support Force. According to *China Daily*, some people view the military parade as a "waste of money" or a "show of military muscle to the world." However, the author argues that the parade was held to "inspire both the PLA and the Chinese people to endeavor to achieve the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation." Cui Yiliang, editor-in-chief of a defense magazine explained that the goal of the nuclear weapons was to serve as a nuclear deterrent and also to be available to conduct a second strike in retaliation in the event of an attack by a third country.

*China Daily* refutes any claims of the country being a threat, but other sources see the show of force in a different light. According to *SCMP*, Rory Medcalf, head of the National Security College at Australian National University in Canberra expressed his opinion through a tweet that said, "rolling nuclear-capable missiles through the streets is the ultimate show of insecurity and cold war thinking." *AFP* described the parade as a "tightly choreographed procession across Tiananmen Square," which "underscored a level of material and technological innovation that is increasingly viewed by many as a threat to US dominance in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond." **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)**

***"...Rolling nuclear-capable missiles through the streets is the ultimate show of insecurity and Cold War thinking."***



DF-31 Ballistic Missiles.

Source: Tyg728 via Wikimedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dongfeng\\_\(missile\)#/media/File:DF-31\\_ballistic\\_missiles\\_20170919.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dongfeng_(missile)#/media/File:DF-31_ballistic_missiles_20170919.jpg), CC BY-SA 4.0



## Continued: China's Latest "Show of Force" Sparks Concern and Commentary

**Source:** Li Daguang, "Commitment to Peace, Not to Conflicts," *China Daily*, 25 September 2019. <https://global.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201909/25/WS5d8b1568a310cf3e3556d6e4.html>

### ***Commitment to Peace, Not to Conflicts***

*The parade, the biggest ever, according to the organizers, apart from highlighting China's achievements in other fields, will also showcase some advanced weapons for the first time.*

*The parade will also showcase the achievements of the military reforms, particularly the military command system reform, and the optimization of size, structure and force composition, apart from highlighting the high level of the military's informatization and its capability in real combat.*

*The soldier formation will reflect the transformation of the command system and composition of the forces. Not only the main military branches — People's Liberation Army Ground Force, PLA Navy, PLA Air Force, PLA Rocket Force, the People's Armed Police Force — but also the newly established PLA Strategic Support Force and PLA Joint Logistic Support Force will participate in the parade.*

*Some have claimed the military parade is a "waste of money" or "show of military muscle to the world", but the parade is being held based on the principle of reasonable expenditure and to inspire both the PLA and the Chinese people to endeavor to achieve the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation.*

*And to those in other countries speculating about the purpose of the military parade suffice it to say there is nothing untoward in the display of China's military power, as it is not intended as a threat to any country.*

**Source:** Minnie Chan and Liu Zhen, "China Rolls Out New Weapon Systems, Nuclear Capable Missiles in Military Parade," *South China Morning Post*, 1 October 2019. <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3031145/china-rolls-out-new-weapon-systems-nuclear-capable-missiles>

### ***China Rolls Out New Weapon Systems, Nuclear Capable Missiles in Military Parade***

*Among them, the Dongfeng, or "East Wind", series of missile systems drew the most attention. They included the DF-17 hypersonic ballistic missile, DF-16 and DF-26 medium-range missiles, and the DF-31AG and DF-41 intercontinental ballistic missiles.*

*The DF-17 – which has a hypersonic glide vehicle that can deliver both nuclear and conventional payloads – was one of the systems making its debut. But the missile in the parade was equipped with a conventional warhead, according to state broadcaster CCTV.*

*Rory Medcalf, head of the National Security College at Australian National University in Canberra, noted its inclusion in the National Day parade, saying in a tweet that "rolling nuclear-capable missiles through the streets is the ultimate show of insecurity and cold war thinking."*

**Source:** "Missiles, Drones and Tanks: China Shows Off Military Prowess," *Agence France Press*, 1 October 2019. <https://www.france24.com/en/20191001-missiles-drones-and-tanks-china-shows-off-military-prowess>

### ***Missiles, Drones and Tanks: China Shows Off Military Prowess***

*China put its growing military might on full display Tuesday (Oct 1) with a parade of new ballistic missiles, supersonic drones and next-generation battlefield tanks that highlighted Beijing's accelerating race to match the firepower of its US rival.*

*The tightly choreographed procession across Tiananmen Square underscored a level of material and technological innovation that is increasingly viewed by many as a threat to US dominance in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.*

*President Xi Jinping, who reviewed the troops before the parade marking 70 years of Communist Party rule, has pushed for the People's Liberation Army to become a "world-class" military by mid-century.*

*According to state news agency Xinhua, the Dongfeng-41 missiles are "the mainstay of China's strategic nuclear strength".*

*The short-to-medium-range DF-17 missile made its public debut. It is believed to be capable of releasing a "hypersonic glider" from the edge of space, with a tough-to-predict trajectory.*

*"This display of nuclear weapons doesn't signal a change in China's nuclear strategy," said Cui Yiliang, editor-in-chief of industry magazine "Modern warships".*

*"It will continue to have a small but effective nuclear arsenal. The goal is to have a nuclear deterrent and be able to conduct a second strike in retaliation in case of an attack by a third country," Cui said.*