



China Launches Another Gaofen Satellite: Potential Military Applications

OE Watch Commentary: About a decade ago, China kicked off a project to launch a series of high-resolution earth observation satellites known as “Gaofen.” These satellites provide optical satellite imagery of the earth. What this means is that they capture high resolution images of both visible colors and infrared bands. According to the highlighted article, published in *South China Morning Post*, this makes them ideal for many civilian purposes, including monitoring pollution and environment, estimating agricultural yields, forecasting weather and disasters, and detecting minerals.

According to the article, however, while the satellites’ ability to take infrared ray images is ideal for civilian applications, they have also been used recently to track the flight of “a fighter jet, thought to be an F-22 (stealth tactical fighter)... .” The article goes on to explain that stealth jets might be able to avoid radar detection. However, equipment such as the higher-resolution cameras found in the Gaofen, and advanced identification and tracking capabilities made possible through artificial intelligence, “could serve as an important support to air defense radars.” China is said to have already launched over 20 satellites since 2013. **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)**

“If equipped with higher-resolution cameras and advanced identification and tracking capabilities thanks to artificial intelligence, [Gaofen] satellites could serve as an important support to air defence radars.”

Source: “China is Sending More of Its Gaofen Satellites into Space. Here’s Why,” *South China Morning Post*, 12 October 2020. <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3105209/china-sending-more-its-gaofen-satellites-space-heres-why>

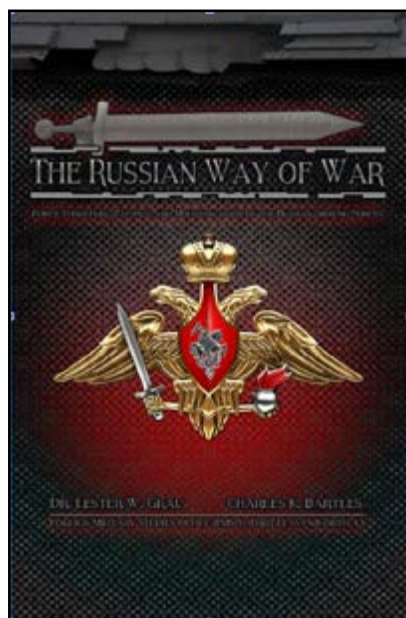
“Gaofen” is a Chinese abbreviation of “high resolution”, which refers to the High Resolution Earth Observation Satellite programme.

China began the project in 2010 and has launched more than 20 satellites, over half of them in the past two years.

These satellites observe and take photos of the Earth, including some infrared ray images, which can be used for many civilian purposes, including monitoring pollution and environment, estimating agricultural yields, forecasting weather and disasters, and detecting minerals.

There are also military applications for the satellites. Last month, China released a video captured by the Jilin-1 Gaofen-3 satellite, in which it continuously tracked the flight of a fighter jet, thought to be an F-22, the most advanced American stealth fighter.

Stealth jets are designed to avoid radar detection, but are visible by optical observation. If equipped with higher-resolution cameras and advanced identification and tracking capabilities thanks to artificial intelligence, these satellites could serve as an important support to air defence radars.



THE RUSSIAN WAY OF WAR by LESTER W. GRAU and CHARLES K. BARTLES

At any given time, assessments of the Russian Armed Forces vary between the idea of an incompetent and corrupt conscript army manning decrepit Soviet equipment and relying solely on brute force, to the idea of an elite military filled with Special Operations Forces (SOF) who were the “polite people” or “little green men” seen on the streets in Crimea. This book will attempt to split the difference between these radically different ideas by shedding some light on what the Russian Ground Forces consist of, how they are structured, how they fight, and how they are modernizing.

DOWNLOAD AT:

<https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fmso/m/fmso-books/199251/download>