



Fact or Psychological Warfare? China's Development of the World's Strongest Individual Firepower System

OE Watch Commentary: Foreign press reports are claiming that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) has been equipping some of its ground forces with the QTS-11 infantry integrated combat system, which is designed to "adapt to future informatized warfare."

Echoing the claims from a CCTV program, reports are calling the gear the "strongest individual firepower in the world."

According to the excerpted articles from *Asia Times* and *Global Times*, China developed the QTS-11 system in response to a need to "catch up in the race to arm soldiers" and took a decade of dedicated effort to accomplish it. The gear consists of a 5.8 millimeter-caliber rifle, integrated with a 20 millimeter grenade launcher, capable of destroying antipersonnel targets within a radius of 200 meters. The system is fully digitalized and can include other wearable gear such as thermal imagers, laser rangefinders, wearable computer and positioning, communication and situational awareness helmets. The whole intent is to improve combat strength by arming individual soldiers with a complete unit rather than as a segment of a larger force in urban warfare and dismounted infantry actions.

The QTS-11 system is described as a possible game-changer. According to *Asia Times*, a military hospital in China's East Theater Command claims to be developing "an Ironman-like, weight-bearing suit mocked as a 'wearable skeleton' to carry heavier gear" as the PLA seeks to increase the number of "gadgets and devices on each of its infantrymen." The article also notes how the gear has reportedly been "deployed to about 50,000 infantrymen and other troops for special duties, air assault, and paratrooper brigades of 13 field armies."

The article from the *Global Times* points out that the United States was the first to develop an integrated combat system, but "they dropped the research of Objective Individual Combat Weaponry system due to weight problems." The article also reports how the QTS-11 system has also been used for training by a branch of PLA Special Operations Forces, known as Sky Wolf Commandos in China's Western Theater command, which has reportedly caught India's attention.

The article from *The Economic Times* questions China's motives in announcing the deployment of the system. According to the article, China's Western Theater Command is responsible for security along the 3,488 kilometer Line of Actual Control (LAC) with India. Media reports announcing the deployment of the QTS-11 system along the border of India are perceived as possible psychological warfare being used by the PLA because the news followed within a few days of Chinese reports announcing it was upgrading its air defenses along the LAC. The article cites another example of Chinese psychological warfare being used against India during last year's 73-day Doklam standoff. The article states that during the standoff, the "Chinese military carried out a media blitzkrieg," which highlighted the deployment of new battle tanks as well as massive military exercises on the Tibetan plateau. Whether China's announcements are solid fact or psychological warfare, it is a potential development worth tracking. **End OE Watch Commentary (Hurst)**

Source: "PLA Infantrymen Now Have Powerful Rifles, but Still Lag US," *Asia Times*, 22 January 2018. <http://www.atimes.com/article/pla-infantrymen-now-powerful-rifles-still-lag-us>

The big gun, part of the PLA's QTS-11 system, is the result of a decade of painstaking efforts to catch up in the race to arm soldiers... Together with other wearable gear such as thermal imagers, laser rangefinders, wearable computer and positioning, communication and situational awareness helmets, the whole QTS-11 kit costs a grand total of 1 million yuan a pop. It has already been deployed to about 50,000 infantrymen and other troops for special duties, air assault and paratroopers brigades of 13 field armies, Hong Kong-based Ming Pao newspaper reports.

...the QTS-11 system could be a game changer, and it has also been reported that a military hospital of the East Theater Command is now developing an Ironman-like, weight-bearing suit mocked as a "wearable skeleton" to carry heavier gear as Beijing aims to put more gadgets and devices on each of its infantrymen.

Source: Liu Caiyu, "PLA Arms Ground Force Unit with Integrated Warfare System," *Global Times*, 22 February 2018. <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1090258.shtml>

A branch of the People's Liberation Army Ground Force has been equipped with an integrated individual soldier combat system to "adapt to future informatized warfare," which has been hailed as the strongest individual firepower in the world, media reported on Thursday.

The Sky Wolf Commandos, a branch of PLA Special Operations Forces from the Western Theater Command, have been equipped with the QTS-11 system in their training, Weihutang, a column affiliated with China Central Television (CCTV), reported on Thursday.

The system,...is capable of destroying antipersonnel targets. Each soldier equipped with the system is armed with a thermal imager and optoelectronic and positioning systems, Science and Technology Daily reported.

Source: "PLA Equips Ground Unit along Indian Border with US Army-Style Combat Gear: Report," *The Economic Times*, 23 February 2018. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/pla-equips-ground-unit-along-indian-border-with-us-army-style-combat-gear-report/articleshow/63042343.cms>

The announcement by the official media of the deployment of new system along the border with India followed a report few days ago of the upgrading the air defences along the LAC was seen by military observers here as a psychological warfare being resorted to by the PLA.

The Global Times earlier quoted an expert as saying the upgradation of the air defence with deployment of fighter jets like J-10 and J-11 is aimed at confronting any threat from India in the light of India acquiring new fighter aircraft, an apparent reference to Rafale aircraft

The Chinese military carried out a media blitzkrieg during the height of last year's 73-day Doklam standoff highlighting deployment of new battle tank as well as massive military exercises on the Tibetan plateau.



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Soldiers of the Chinese People's Liberation Army 1st Amphibious Mechanized Infantry Division.

Source: By Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Flickr: 110712-N-TT977-077), https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/72/Soldiers_of_the_Chinese_People%27s_Liberation_Army%2011.jpg, CC BY 2.0.

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