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'INITIAL ANALYSIS OF LEAKED VIDEO OF CHINESE WAR PREPAREDNESS EXERCISE IN GUANGDONG'

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The timing of the 'leak' of the video of a 'War Preparedness Mobilisation Exercise' convened by the Guangdong Province Communist Party Committee on May 14, 2022 is interesting. It is yet unclear whether the video was deliberately 'leaked' by the Chinese as part of psywar, or it was an unauthorised recording of the meeting by a disgruntled People's Liberation Army (PLA) officer. It will nonetheless certainly be carefully analysed by China's neighbours and competitors.

2. The 'leak' also coincided with a People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) exercise (May 19-23), US President Biden's visit to Japan and the Republic of Korea (RoK), and a joint China-Russia air exercise (May 24) when six strategic bombers of China's PLA Air Force (PLAAF) flew over the Mikasa Straits and Sea of Japan for the first time since 2021. China has maintained this military pressure on Taiwan with the multi-force exercises in the 'Eastern War Zone' on June 1.

3. The hour-long video reveals details of China's war planning, roles of the PLA Military Commander and Political Commissar, role of the Central and provincial CCP organisations and details of defence-related assets in Guangdong Province and the Region. It specified that the Provincial Party Committee Secretary is the General Commander of the provincial military-civilian joint command while the Governor, Provincial Military Region Commander and Political Commissar are commanders. The Governor is responsible for organizing implementation of mobilization and the provincial military district commander is responsible for organizing and 'commanding' the action before commencement of the war.

4. It disclosed that the Military-Civil Command comprises "elite" personnel from the provincial party committee, provincial government, provincial military district, provincial national mobilization committee, related enterprise units, the armed police Guangdong General Force, six mobile detachments of the armed police, and the 311 Sea Defence brigade. Analysis of the video will be useful for those of China's neighbours with outstanding territorial issues as the planning sequence and essential elements will be replicated in all provinces directly involved in military operations.

5. For India specifically, the provinces in the Western Theatre Command that will be mobilised are: Tibet (Xizang), Sichuan, Xinjiang, Chongqing, Gansu, Ningxia and Qinghai. Sichuan particularly has a concentration of defence manufacturers, including aircraft and drone companies. Lanzhou, Lhasa and Chengdu will be the mobilisation headquarters.

6. Chairing the meeting, Zhang Hu, member of the Standing Committee of the Guangdong Provincial Party Committee, Secretary of the Political and Legal Committee, Executive Vice Governor of the Provincial Government and Deputy Secretary of the Party Group, addressed the issues of morale and ideological awareness of troops. He described this as the key to winning and stressed the need to “unify” ideological understanding. Invoking Xi Jinping, he asserted “we won’t hesitate to start a war, crush Taiwan’s independence and strong enemies’ plots, and resolutely defend national sovereignty and territorial integrity”. He exhorted: “We must unify our thought and action according to the decision and deployment of the Party Central Committee and the Central Military Commission.”

7. Civil-Military coordination was the next item on the agenda. Zhang Hu emphasised the need to “quickly set up a joint military-civilian command party committee. Second, pay a high degree of attention to our own defence, adhere to the bottom line thinking, prepare for a rainy day, defend before the attack, and adhere to whole-process defence”. He called for focus on the “Pearl River Delta super-dense cities and important military and livelihood targets in the region”; early and good coordination of air defence, target defence, and other preparations for war for maximum protection of people’s lives and properties and maintaining the sustainability of mobilization.

8. The Guangdong General Force of the Armed Police, he elaborated, will take the lead and 7,000 local militia will participate. Ground defence operations in 17 cities outside eastern Guangdong will be led by local joint military-civilian commands. The Sixth Detachment of the Armed Police Second Mobile General, one mobile brigade, Sea Defence Brigade 311 and the second militia battalion comprising a total of 26,000 people (excluding forces in four cities in eastern Guangdong) were assigned ground defence operations in 17 cities.

9. Main defences were to be set up in Guangzhou, Foshan, Shenzhen, and Huizhou. The key defence areas identified were Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Huizhou, and Yangjiang. Important defence targets included the War Zone’s joint warfare command center, maritime operations sub-center, Daya Bay Nuclear Power Station, South China Power Grid and other important civilian targets. The meeting noted that the Guangzhou area has capacities in radiation environmental monitoring, nuclear, biological, and chemical support, and biochemical medical testing.

10. PLA Major General Zhou He, Commander of the Guangdong Military Region and Major General Wang Shouxin, Political Commissar of the Guangdong Military Region, endorsed these decisions. They added: (i) provincial industry must obey the unified command of the joint command; (ii) military-civilian departments at all levels should accomplish their respective duties and ensure that the ‘party, government, military, police, and civilians work together to win’; (iii) while transitioning from ‘Normal to War state’ the needs of the troops to support front-line operations must be fully ensured; (iv) lives of the masses and stability of the rear [of the battlefield] must be ensured; (v) mobilization of the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea must be simultaneously coordinated; (vi) “traditional and new type forces”, as well as resources from the province and overseas, need to be deployed for which all resources in the Taiwan Strait area need to be pooled; (vii) since there are a large number of migrant workers and a large number of factories and enterprises, precautions require to be taken to prevent a run on banks, evacuations by factories, and exodus of migrant workers

wanting to go home; (vi) roads and targets must be well protected against enemy strikes and attacks; (vii) because of China's proximity to Hong Kong and Macao and the long coastline, it is essential to prevent infiltration and sabotage of targets by the enemy; and (viii) there was particular focus on Hong Kong to prevent its use as a base by the enemy to create chaos to disrupt the war. They emphasised the need for multiple measures and a multi-pronged approach to ensure that people stay motivated and the rear areas and social order are stable.

11. The PLA officers revealed that the South China Sea area command post formed by its "elite" forces will be sent to the Zhanjiang area in due course and that twelve special command posts were established for people's air defence, traffic mobilization, national economic mobilization, public opinion propaganda, stability maintenance, chaos control etc.

12. The importance of communications using military and civilians links was underscored, with measures to establish an information data security and information room, a battalion-level information and communication force in the province, and company and platoon-level forces in municipalities and counties respectively. Four communications links were identified: (a) Military Commission Joint Command Center to the War Zone Joint Command Center, to the military joint command centers established in the province and cities. It disclosed that a 'confidential information remote delivery system' will be integrated into the joint command system. (ii) CMC Mobilization Department to the provincial military district leadership, mainly relying on the 509+ platform and the national defence mobilization task information command system. (iii) command communication links from the provincial, city, and county level military-civilian joint commands to the task teams, relying mainly on the ultra-short wave, Tiantong-1 satellite phone to establish mobile communications; and (iv) command and communication links from the army to the civilians, relying on the 'integrated confidential password system' on the 'Acer government intranet' and deploying the national defence mobilization information system to import civilian data to the military-civilian joint command.

13. 1,358 detachments of various types with a total of 140,000 personnel, 953 ships of various types, and 1,653 units/sets of various unmanned equipment would be available. Other resources mentioned were 20 airports and docks, 6 repair and shipbuilding yards, 14 emergency transfer centers, and grain depots, hospitals, blood stations, oil depots, gas stations, etc.

14. The National Defence Mobilization Recruitment Office will recruit 15,500 new military service personnel, retired military personnel, and 'special talents' from Guangdong province.

15. The National Defence Commission will coordinate seven types of national level warfare resources, including sixty four 10,000-ton roll-on/roll-off ships, 38 aircraft, 588 train cars and 19 civil facilities including airports, docks, housing and other civilian facilities.

16. 'New-style' ocean-going forces will conduct reconnaissance, submarine search, search and rescue outside the first island chain; protect the forward deployment of rocket forces; and support troops to rescue the wounded and repair ships and aircraft. To ensure interoperability in the South China Sea, professional repair, and air and sea transport forces will be deployed to assist troops to repair and set-up towers and markers. Militia fishing boats

will be organised to fight “the people's war” at sea and respond to infringements by Vietnam, Philippines, Malaysia and other countries.

17. Seven cities in western and northern Guangdong will have central roles in strategic decision-making, support and response for the South China Sea, while six major cities in the Pearl River Delta and the main deployment sites of the 74th Army Group will support strategic decision-making. It identified their five main tasks as: (i) Ground recruitment including recruitment of Reserve personnel and Retired military personnel from the rear region and the Pearl River Delta industrial clusters. (ii) Maritime support mobilization involving 14 coastal cities. They will mobilise roll-on/roll-off ships, fishing vessels, salvage vessels, multi-purpose vessels and other vessels. (iii) The core area of the Pearl River Delta will be responsible for ‘New domain’ and ‘new system’ resource mobilization, including aerospace reconnaissance, ocean warning, cyberspace, underwater detection, unmanned combat resources and other potential ‘new domain and new system’ resources. (iv) economic centers at all levels, material insurance bases, comprehensive regional support centers, ship repair yards, grain depots, blood stations, oil depots, gas stations, etc will contribute to equipment and material mobilization, and (v) Ground Defense Force Mobilization assisted by all cities will recruit locally and locally deploy all militia detachments and defence mobilization professional teams.

18. Assuring that most tasks would be completed, the meeting said two aspects required special attention. These were: (i) to complete the recruitment of 15,500 troops within the short time of a month; and (ii) the “big task” of maritime support coordination because of persisting problems with the quality of ship personnel, performance in wartime and fitness of equipment.

19. Among the several details revealed were: the war-time tasks delegated to Guangdong of retrofitting 365 ro-ro ships within 45 days and responsibility for 8 other ships and 64 ‘national resource ships’. It revealed that the Guangdong region has 90 enterprises capable of retrofitting ships. They can retrofit 113 ships altogether at the same time and 280 can be done within a month! These high-quality shipbuilding and retrofitting resources are concentrated in Guangzhou, Yangjiang, Dongguan, and other places. Enumerating the efforts to complete the retrofitting, the video said ship-repair personnel from Guangzhou, Jiangmen, and Zhanjiang would be recruited.

20. It disclosed that the monthly production capacity of the province's unmanned vessel centers, namely, Zhuhai Yunzhou, and Jianglong Shipbuilding, is 90.

21. Disclosing that 2,000+ pieces of hi-tech equipment, 480 drones and 70 unmanned boats are currently in place, it divulged that the province’s drone mobilization center Shenzhen Kewetai at Dongguan can manufacture 80 drones a month. Drone production capacities of companies like Shenzhen Smart Drone(SMD), Dongguan, Guangzhou Hopong and another 9 companies, will be boosted.

22. The video disclosed that ‘Network attack and control systems’ will be deployed in this preparatory phase. Stating that of 21 ‘network attack and control’ detachments, 15 had been mobilized, it revealed the shortage of 6 detachments, 60 people and 32 ‘attack and control

system industry network' experts. Confirming the close ties between the PLA and China's IT and Technology companies, the meeting proposed mobilising Qianxin, Huawei, Tencent, and other hi-tech enterprises. Attack and control system industry network experts from the Southern Power Grid Guangdong Company, Guangzhou Metro Group, and other large enterprises would also be drafted. Southern Power Grid, incidentally, is closely tied to China's security apparatus.

23. Asserting that the Guangdong Region has a full industrial chain of commercial aerospace industries, the meeting decided to tap enterprises in Shenzhen to supplement the present reliance on Zhuhai Orbita, Shenzhen Aerospace, Dongfanghong Satellite Co., Foshan and Deliya.

24. The video revealed the Region has four satellite detachments and 16 low-orbit satellites with 0.5 to 10 meters global remote ultra-high optical resolution sensing and imaging capabilities. The provincial command would ensure these remain in play and improve security at the four ground receiving stations in Zhuhai (Guangdong), Mohe (Heilongjiang), and Gaomi (Shandong). The Zhuhai military-civilian joint command post was identified as an important defence target for inclusion in the joint defence system.

25. According to the leaked video, the meeting discussed the use of nuclear and chemical rescue forces. It noted that the province's nuclear rescue force is limited and relies on the resources of Shenzhen, Jiangmen and Yangjiang, and that professional forces need to be recruited from the Guangzhou area to form a nuclear and chemical rescue force.

26. In the actual preparatory phase posters for recruits, reservists and guidance of civilians will appear in the concerned areas. The advances in telecommunications, including quantum, could make Chinese traffic analysis very difficult, but there would be increased activity in the preparatory phase. Satellites and Radar should spot related military activity.

27. While the authenticity of the video is being verified, it nonetheless gives a fair idea of the resources each Theatre Command/War Zone can call upon. The War Time Preparedness Exercise does not imply preparations for an actual war against Taiwan, but does indicate that the PLA is preparing for this eventuality.

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