

Reinforcing the country's sky net

In the radar force of the PLA (People's Liberation Army) Air Force, some vehicles are mobile – as opposed to fixed stations on mountain tops – and they are called mobile radar forces.

The air force of the PLA Southern Theater Command, has such a mobile radar battalion. Its commander Major Guo Tao said on April 25 that they are “a necessary complement to fixed stations” in that they “patch up, reinforce and extend the colossal sky net” of the country's radar detection ranges.

Established in May, 1991, this battalion was the first-ever modern mobile radar force in the PLA Air Force. Its creation followed the central military authority's call for an effective response to high-intensity regional conflicts in modern warfare.

In modern warfare, combatting parties usually seek to paralyze each other's air defenses first before conducting further operations. Radar installations, which are the eyes of the air force, are among the first and most vulnerable targets for enemy attacks.

Having no self-defense capabilities itself, once a radar is destroyed, it can tear apart the regional defensive monitoring network. Under such circumstances, the mobile radar forces must kick in and patch up the country's defensive sky net of radar monitoring.

Likewise, there may be blind spots in radar detection ranges either affected by terrain or a radar's own limitations, or a new battlefield out of the range of fixed radar stations. As for the solution, deploying a mobile radar unit in such blind-spots will instantly reinforce the PLA's air defenses.

Throughout the 26 years since the battalion's establishment, this mobile radar force has participated in more than 30 major exercises, and their tracks have reached 26 provinces nationwide.

“We stand ready to be deployed anywhere that the country needs,” said Senior Colonel Duan Zhibing, brigade political commissar, which supervises the battalion. He explained that the mobile radar force is also an extension of the country's sky net.

China launches emergency response to Xinjiang quake



Rescuers work at Kuzigun Village in Taxkorgan County, northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, May 11, 2017. [Photo/Xinhua]

China has activated emergency response procedures following a 5.5-magnitude earthquake in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region early Thursday morning.

The China Earthquake Administration activated level-III emergency response procedures earlier Thursday.

All departments concerned are on high alert, and will continue to monitor for aftershocks and evaluate damage.

The Ministry of Civil Affairs and the China National Commission for Disaster Reduction have also initiated grade-IV emergency response measures and sent teams to assist relief work.

A grade-IV response, the lowest in China's emergency response system, means a 24-hour alert, daily damage reports, and the allocation of money and relief materials within 48 hours.

Also on Thursday, China's Red Cross Society activated level-III emergency response to the earthquake. Apart from sending a work team to assist relief, it has allocated emergency funds of 100,000 yuan (US\$15,000) and sent supplies from its local branch to the affected region.

Eight fatalities have been confirmed and 23 people have been injured in the quake that jolted Taxkorgan County, Xinjiang, at 5:58 a.m. Thursday. Over 1,500 houses collapsed or were badly damaged.

Taxkorgan, some 1,250 kilometers from Urumqi, capital of the region, borders Pakistan, Afghanistan and Tajikistan.

1 ex-official sentenced, 1 pleads guilty in corruption cases

Wang Baoan, former head of the National Bureau of Statistics, pleaded guilty on Thursday to accepting 154 million yuan (US\$22.3 million) in the Zhangjiakou Intermediate People's Court, Hebei Province.

A verdict will be issued at a later date.

In a separate case on the same day, in Lanzhou, Gansu Province, Mao Xiaobing, a former high-ranking official from Qinghai Province, was sentenced to life in prison for taking bribes and embezzling public funds.

The Lanzhou Intermediate People's Court found that Mao, a former member of the Standing Committee of the Communist Party of China Qinghai Provincial Committee, had accepted more than 104 million yuan in bribes and embezzled 400 million yuan in public funds.

In the Hebei case, prosecutors said Wang, the former NBS head, abused power to gain benefits for others on project approvals, business contracts and job promotions, then accepted bribes, which were either paid in cash or property, of 154 million yuan, either to himself or through family members, between 1994 and 2016.

Over the course of 22 years, Wang served as the Party chief of the General Office of the State Administration of Taxation, vice-minister of finance and head of the NBS, among other roles.

In January 2016, the country's top anti-graft watchdog, the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, opened an investigation of Wang for "serious violations." It said he seriously violated Party political discipline and made speeches that went against the CPC Central Committee position on important matters.

The watchdog said he obstructed the investigation and disobeyed the eight-point code to cut bureaucracy, while living a corrupt life that included stays at high-end hotels and visits to expensive entertainment venues.

He was expelled from the Party and removed his post in August.

In the other case on Thursday, the court in Gansu Province deprived Mao Xiaobing, the former Qinghai official, of his political rights and ordered his personal property confiscated. Illicit gains will be turned over to the State treasury.

The verdict said that between 1995 and 2013, Mao took advantage of various official positions to seek benefits in project contracts, stock acquisitions,

purchasing and sales of products and real estate developments on behalf of others.

In exchange, he extorted or accepted money or gifts from companies and individuals.

The court also found that in 2006, Mao had taken advantage of his post and embezzled public funds.

It said that in deciding the sentence, it took into consideration the fact that Mao had extorted bribes, which deserves harsher punishment. But it also noted that he had confessed, shown remorse, cooperated in returning illegal gains and provided information about other people's violations during the investigation, facts that may warrant leniency.

Mao said he will not appeal.

[China increases funding for hospitals](#)



A nurse at the China-Japan Friendship Hospital cares for an inpatient.
[Photo/China Daily]

China has been increasing financial support for the healthcare sector to guarantee all citizens affordable and proper medical services, according to senior finance and health officials.

The central government has earmarked more than 1.4 trillion yuan (\$205

billion) this year for healthcare, Song Qichao, deputy director of the Ministry of Finance's Social Security Department, said at a joint news conference on Thursday with the National Health and Family Planning Commission.

That accounts for 7.2 percent of government expenditures, he said, up from about 5 percent in 2008.

"We see healthcare as an important sector that affects people's livelihoods, and we will continue to increase financial support," Song said.

The latest round of changes is a continuation of nationwide healthcare reforms that started in 2009 to eliminate irregularities, particularly in drug distribution and pricing, and to ensure public access to proper and affordable medical services.

The government investment has helped the country achieve universal healthcare by extending health insurance policies to the rural population and urban unemployed, who previously had no coverage at all.

The two new programs are largely subsidized by the government, and people can participate on a voluntary basis, with users paying a reasonable premium.

For instance, the government is allocating 450 yuan for each participant this year, up 30 yuan from 2016, according to Liang Wannian, head of the commission's Medical Reform Department.

The premium paid by the participant varies by region but is less than the government's contribution, he added.

Liang said the government had increased its allocation for each participant for eight consecutive years.

At the same time, he said, the government would strictly curb improper increases of medical costs.

The average annual increase in medical costs at public hospitals, he said, has to be kept under 10 percent. To meet that goal, the commission has been pushing reforms of public hospitals. That includes ending a longtime policy of marking up drug prices, which led to over-prescriptions and unnecessary treatments, and wasted the money of patients and insurance programs.

Last month, Beijing led the way by scraping drug price markups at all public hospitals, and all hospitals nationwide will follow suit by the end of September, ang said. Government funds will support the hospitals, he added.

Remarks by HR/VP Mogherini on the EU's humanitarian support at the 2017 London Conference on Somalia

Check against delivery!

Thank you very much and thanks to you and to the Secretary General of the United Nations [António Guterres] for convening this meeting and also for having this focus on the humanitarian situation. Just a few weeks ago in Brussels, we gathered some of the key partners and key donors that are around this table exactly to focus on how we can step up our humanitarian support to face the risk of famine now.

The European Union, as you know well, is by far the first donor for Somalia in all different sectors. When it comes to our response to the drought, it amounts to over €460 million; still we know that this is not enough and that we need to mobilise more resources. We will do our part, we will continue to do our part, but we need others to come in and increase the level of support if we want to avoid the catastrophe.

We believe also that the availability of resources is not the only challenge we are facing in Somalia when it comes to the risk of famine. Insecurity, access constraints, extortions of aid are among the biggest obstacles to deliver aid to the most needy. Restrictive access remains for us the major impediment for the roll out of full relief operations covering the majority of the needs.

We also have a concern about the visibility of the return process of up to 250 000 Somali refugees living in Kenyan refugee camps in the current context of severe droughts.

Beyond human suffering, we believe it is important – as the Secretary General mentioned – to contain the political risks. We are in a delicate moment for the institutions, the government, which is very much absorbed by the impact of the droughts while it has started its process only a few months after the inauguration of the President. We believe it is essential that we support and help the government to be seen delivering on the expectations of the population and remain focused also on the other critical political and security challenges the population needs to find answers to because there are somehow interrelated.

Two last things. One is the regional dimension; we are focusing on Somalia here because assisting Somalia at this moment also means assisting its neighbours to limit the spill over. Yet each country in the region, and particularly Ethiopia and Kenya, deserve specific attention and support. We should not forget it.

And, last but not least, we need to take climate change more seriously. This

is true in general political terms – and I discussed this in the UN with the Secretary General in the last days- but also in our projections for the region.

Secondly, only stability and development can create an environment in which natural disasters can be coped with. And this is why the rest of the conference today will be also so important.

I thank you.