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Chinese Nuclear Forces: AI/N3C, entanglement, and Risks of Nuclear Escalation

China's limited nuclear-conventional entanglement has been driven more by necessity, technological development, mission requirements, and maximization of flexibility and leverage of capabilities in anticipation of US-China strategic rivalry and possible conflict scenarios. While specific Chinese views on nuclear-conventional entanglement and AI-enabled military capabilities are few and far between, there is some consensus among the Chinese expert community that there is no clear indication that nuclear armed states intend to apply AI or autonomous systems to their nuclear weapons. Instead, AI will have a larger impact on nuclear deterrence architecture. In particular, the AI-enabled systems in nuclear weapons could include a range of aspects, from early warning to C3 and decision-making, from weapon delivery systems to air and missile defense.

Chinese Perspectives on EDTs and Military Applications

The last revolutionary military development that changed the nature and character of war was the onset of the nuclear age. With emerging and disruptive technologies (EDTs) increasingly becoming a new field of military competition among great powers, serious questions have been raised about whether the emergence of EDTs and their integration into military doctrines, procurement, training, and operations will fundamentally change the ways modern warfare will be conducted, especially whether they will undermine the relevance of nuclear deterrence. Will the application of EDTs lead to a new revolution in military affairs? And how might this development affect the strategic stability between potential nuclear adversaries? This lecture introduces Chinese perspectives on these critical issues and focuses in particular their military applications in cyber and AI.

Short Bio

Dr. Jingdong YUAN is Director, China and Asia Security Programme at Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. Dr. Yuan's research focuses on Indo-Pacific security, Chinese foreign policy, Sino-Indian relations, China-EU relations, and nuclear arms control and nonproliferation. He is the co-author of *Chinese Cruise Missiles* (2014) and *China and India: Cooperation or Conflict?* (2003), and co-editor of *Re-engaging China* (2023), *Trump's America and International Relations in the Indo-Pacific* (2021) and *Australia and China at 40* (2012). He is currently completing a book manuscript on China-South Asian relations

Suggested (further) readings (Dr. Jingdong Yuan, SIPRI)

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Stokes, Jacob, Colin H. Kahl, Andrea Kendall-Taylor and Nicholas Lokker (2025), *Averting AI Armageddon: U.S.-China-Russia Rivalry at the Nexus of Nuclear Weapons and Artificial Intelligence* (Washington, DC: Center for a New American Security), [https://s3.us-east-](https://s3.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/files.cnas.org/documents/AI-Armageddon-2025-finalb.pdf)

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