

Headlines:

- **Blinken Claims China Wants to Take Taiwan**
- **Ex-UK Pilots Lured to Help Chinese Military**
- **Xi Opens National Congress**

Details:

Blinken Claims China Wants to Take Taiwan

Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Tuesday claimed that China is looking to take Taiwan "on a much faster timeline" and accused Beijing of wanting to change the status quo across the Taiwan Strait. Blinken didn't provide evidence for the claim but insisted that there's "been a change in the approach from Beijing toward Taiwan in recent years." There has been an increase in China's military activity around Taiwan, but that came in direct response to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and other members of Congress visiting the island. Chinese President Xi Jinping reiterated at the CCP's general Congress that Beijing's policy of seeking "peaceful reunification" with Taiwan but not ruling the use of force as an option. Xi warned against "outside interference" over the issue, and other Chinese officials have explicitly warned that more US support for Taipei's "independence forces" could lead to war.

Ex-UK Pilots Lured to Help Chinese Military

Former British military pilots are being lured to China with large sums of money to pass on their expertise to the Chinese military, it is claimed. Up to 30 former UK military pilots are thought to have gone to train members of China's People's Liberation Army. The UK is issuing an intelligence alert to warn former military pilots against working for the Chinese military. Attempts to headhunt pilots are ongoing and had been ramping up recently, Western officials say. A spokesperson from the Ministry of Defence said the training and the recruiting of pilots does not breach any current UK law but officials in the UK and other countries are trying to deter the activity. "It is a lucrative package that is being offered to people," said one Western official, adding that "money is a strong motivator". Some of the packages are thought to be as much as £237,911 (\$270,000). The retired British pilots are being used to help understand the way in which Western planes and pilots operate, information which could be vital in the event of any conflict, such as over Taiwan. "They are a very attractive body of people to then pass on that knowledge," a Western official said. "It's taking Western pilots of great experience to help develop Chinese military air force tactics and capabilities." A spokesman for Prime Minister Liz Truss said the government was taking "decisive steps" to stop the headhunting and "protect our national security".

Xi Opens National Congress

Chinese President Xi Jinping opened the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) by delivering a work report, which reiterated Xi's standard policy goals for China. Much of the report focused on reinvigorating ideology in all aspects of society, including an entire section on building socialist culture. The work report suggests that the Party will focus on building a nationalist culture and pro-CPC ideology in education, cyberspace, the courts, entertainment, the military and beyond. This bodes poorly for countless industrial sectors, as ideology will continue to trump best market practices when the two conflict. Furthermore, Xi's hold on power seems secure, with the report aligning closely with his own priorities for governing China over the last decade. The report also evinced a siege mentality toward foreign affairs and domestic issues, and it offered less coverage of economic reform. After a decade in power Xi has struggled to deal with China's core issues of the trade war with China, Taiwan and transfers to another economic model. Xi appears to be focussed on maintaining his own grip on power.