# China Increases Nuclear Arsenal with Eyes on Global Parity



### China Expands Nuclear Arsenal Amid Global Tensions

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China is undergoing significant expansion and modernization of its nuclear capabilities, potentially achieving parity in intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) with the United States or Russia by 2030. This development is outlined in the annual report by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

As of January, China's nuclear stockpile has increased to 500 warheads from 410 the previous year. SIPRI's report highlights the global trend of decreasing total warhead numbers due to the phasing out of Cold War-era arsenals, juxtaposed with rising numbers of operational warheads prepared for rapid deployment.

Approximately 2,100 deployed nuclear warheads globally are on "high operational alert," primarily owned by Russia and the United States. For the first time, China is also believed to have some warheads at this alert level. SIPRI's findings align with a U.S. Pentagon report to Congress that estimated China currently has over 500 operational nuclear warheads, possibly exceeding 1,000 by the decade's end.

Hans M. Kristensen, from the Federation of American Scientists and SIPRI, noted that China is expanding its arsenal faster than any other nation. Pranay Vaddi, a National Security Council official, emphasized that continued adversary expansion could necessitate an increase in the U.S. nuclear arsenal.

Historically maintaining around 200 warheads, China's recent buildup could lead to over 700 warheads by 2027. Tong Zhao from Carnegie China suggests this expansion aims to enhance China's international perception rather than achieve immediate military objectives.

While China's arsenal growth continues, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has voiced concerns about the need for nuclear transparency and modernization within the alliance. Stoltenberg warned that the increased threat from nations like Russia and China may force NATO to reconsider its nuclear posture.

As the geopolitical landscape evolves, SIPRI's report underscores the challenges in nuclear arms control, exacerbated by ongoing global conflicts such as those in Ukraine and Gaza.