

You: Hey M.J.V.M., what is MCF? | María José Vilajuliu Morales



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Global Studies

Ganador de la **UNIVERSIDAD POMPEU FABRA**, con su proyecto «**YOU: HEY M.J.V.M., WHAT IS MCF?**»,

que puede leer aquí:

A través de un chat de inteligencia artificial (M.J.V.M.) en el que el lector ha buscado el término Military-Civil Fusion (MCF) aparece información sobre qué es, el porqué es relevante para el Partido Comunista de China, cómo se está llevando a cabo desde el sector privado y la sociedad civil y las limitaciones que la estrategia presenta.

You: Hey M.J.V.M., what is MCF? Is it good or a real threat?

Hello, dear reader.

Thank you for making contact with M.J.V.M. (Major_Joy_Vessel_Machine), everyone's favourite A.I. chat! I see you have solicited knowledge regarding Military-Civilian Fusion, from the Mandarin ???? (pinyin: J?nmín rónghé).

MFC is one of the key components that China is trying to implement to its military agenda by blurring the lines between its civilian and military goals, through cooperation from both sides. The strategy is personally supervised by Xi Jinping, the General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party. Technological advancements, intellectual property and research of both the private sector and civilians is collected to meet their military goals.

The key technologies said to be a part of the initiative are: nuclear technology, quantum computing, semiconductors, 5G, big data, aerospace technology, and perhaps most importantly, Artificial Intelligence (yay!). In the words of the General Secretary in the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, that took place in 2022: "We will better coordinate strategies and plans, align policies and systems, and share resources and production factors between the military and civilian sectors. We will improve the system and layout of science, technology, and industries related to national defense and step up capacity building in these areas."

So far, the policies that have been implemented are focused on voluntary cooperation from the public in accordance to their military goals rather than coercion. This, however, doesn't take away from the dangers of MFC; the fusion threatens to put the values international relationships are based on on the line and strengthens the already existing barrier between everyday people and private companies with the PCC, their information being sometimes obtained through illicit means and their interests being gambled with, more on that later.

Although it was estimated by Chinese experts that in 2019 only around 2% of the country's

private high-tech companies were linked to military work (especially auxiliary positions), it would be a mistake to misrepresent its impact on real life. The concept of military affairs being joined by civilian actors has been given different names throughout the CPC's history, starting from Mao Tse Tung and only in recent years acquiring the name you've looked up and finally starting to take off. It is being a slow departure, but a departure nonetheless.

You: Why did the PCC come up with this strategy?

Military defense expenditure is high, – think of infrastructure, big data and logistics among others – but so is the economic power and profit national enterprises bring, not to mention their international influence. These companies' investment in the People Liberation Army (PLA) would be a loyalty test to the nation and to lift some economic weight off of the state. Be La Bruyère and Picarsic exemplify it with how in 2018 a commercial shipping line successfully transported PLA assets from the north to the south of the country. For another one, see: Huawei's 5G research project in collaboration with the PLA Strategic Support Force's Information Engineering University. "At its core," say Kania and Laskai, "China's MCF strategy is a solution to the fact that its defense sector has been dominated by sclerotic state-owned enterprises that remain walled off from the country's dynamic commercial economy."

You: How is the PCC materializing MCF?

Within the private sector, a limited number of companies have openly collaborated with defense partnerships, as those with foreign investors, Macau and Hong Kong included, they are not even allowed to participate, and the ones that do qualify are not interested in putting their commercial objectives at risk because of the hassles procurement present and the overseas legitimacy that such involvement would beget. Since not all companies working under MCF require the Weapons and Equipment Research and Production Certificate, which allows them to access classified military R&D and weapon production information, numbers are thought to be underinclusive, with around 1000 listed in 2016.

A handful of universities has created platforms and laboratories, conducted research for MCF and received military funding from the CMC Equipment Development Department or Science and Technology Commission for their projects. Some cases involving college students are the controversial China Scholarship Council and National Construction High-Level University Postgraduate Program, having been criticized for “forcing” their recipients to pledge their loyalty to the motherland, with cases of said students being pawns of high-tech stealing schemes and, finally, Baidu and iFlytek’s contest for machine reading and natural language processing focused its use in military intelligence, which was directed by the CMC Equipment Development Department.

I hope you found it insightful! ^^

Please rate my services on here.

For other inquiries, you know I’m always watching. Goodbye for now,

M.J.V.M.



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