

Pak. gets powerful missile tracking system from China

In an unprecedented deal, China has sold Pakistan a powerful tracking system which could speed up the development of multi-warhead missiles by its all-weather ally, the state-run Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) said.

Zheng Mengwei, a researcher with the CAS Institute of Optics and Electronics in Chengdu, Sichuan province, confirmed to the Hong Kong-based *South China Morning Post* that Pakistan had bought a highly sophisticated, large-scale optical tracking and measurement system from China. "We simply gave them a pair of eyes. They can use them to look at whatever they want to see, even the Moon," he said.

Mr. Zheng said he could not elaborate on the technology nor where in Pakistan it was being used as it involved the country's defence interests. He, however, said that the Pakistani military recently deployed the system "at a firing range" for use in testing and developing new missiles.

Sensitive equipment

China was the first country to export such sensitive equipment to Pakistan, the CAS said. The Post report attributed the sale of the equipment to Pakistan to India testing the most advanced nuclear-ready intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) Agni-V with a range long enough to hit Beijing or Shanghai.

Chinese authorities declassified information about the sale of the tracking system on Wednesday.

An optical system is a critical component in missile testing. It usually comes with a pair of high-performance telescopes equipped with a laser ranger, high-speed camera, infrared detector and a centralised computer system that automatically captures and follows moving targets. The device records high-resolution images of a missile's departure from its launcher, stage separation, tail flame and, after the missile re-enters atmosphere, the trajectory of the warheads it releases. "The uniqueness of the Chinese-made system lay in its use of four telescopes," Mr. Zheng said.

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