



China must be able to shoot down Musk's Starlink – scientists

Description

CHINA/USA: The satellite system may pose a challenge to Beijing, Chinese researchers cited by UK media say

Chinese military researchers say that China needs to develop the capability to disable or shoot down Elon Musk's Starlink satellites, should Beijing deem it necessary, the Daily Mail reported last week, citing a Chinese study.

According to a paper that was published in the Modern Defense Technology journal, China needs to boost its anti-satellite capabilities in order to track, monitor, and, if necessary, destroy Starlink satellites orbiting the Earth.

The study was led by Ren Yuanzhen, a researcher with the Beijing Institute of Tracking and Telecommunications under the People's Liberation Army Strategic Support Force.

"A combination of soft and hard kill methods should be adopted to make some Starlink satellites lose their functions and destroy the constellation's operating system," the paper said.

Starlink, a satellite constellation system operated by Elon Musk's SpaceX, includes at least 2,400 satellite relays in low-Earth orbit that can facilitate broadband access to information. Although it can provide internet to developing countries, the satellites could also be used by the military, a reality Beijing is aware of.

Starlink has already been battle-tested in the Ukraine conflict, where it has been used by the Ukrainian armed forces for artillery strikes and reconnaissance.

According to Ren's team, via a Starlink connection, US military drones and fighter jets could augment their data transfer *"one hundred fold,"* which might make the system a *"potential threat to Chinese national security."*

Ren believes that China needs to expand its satellite-killing capabilities to be able to effectively hit Starlink as a whole. *“The Starlink constellation constitutes a decentralized system. The confrontation is not about individual satellites, but the whole system. This requires some low-cost, high-efficiency measures,”* the researchers said, without providing details on the methods of attack.

SpaceX previously signed an agreement with the Pentagon to develop new technology based on the Starlink platform in order to detect and track hypersonic weapons. In mid-January, the company also won a contract to transport military supplies and humanitarian aid around the world using a rocket.

Category

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