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XI'S ANTI-CORRUPTION CAMPAIGN MARCHES ON

Since the start of the year, 60,690 people involved in 42,871 separate corruption cases have been punished under the "eight-point decision on improving Party and government conduct." According to the Chinese government's associated monthly reporting system, 8,873 officials were punished in September for violating the frugality code, which was introduced in 2012. These individuals were involved in 6,451 cases across the country, including 1,508 related to "unauthorized subsidies or welfare," while 1,225 were punished for "accepting gifts or money," 954 for "unauthorized use of official cars," 834 for "using public funds for banquets", and 601 for holding "lavish weddings or funerals." Other violations of the code included "traveling with public funds and building offices without authorization." (Xinhua, October 24, 2018)

CHINESE TROOPS DEPLOYED OVERSEAS VIA HONG KONG

For the first time, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) has transported troops overseas via Hong Kong. Last month, at least three Ilyushin Il-76 PLA Air Force aircraft carrying an unknown number of troops and ammunition were part of an airlift to join tripartite wargames with the Thai and Malaysian militaries held in Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia. A platoon of PLA commanders and analysts had also flown to Malaysia from Hong Kong following a brief ceremony on the tarmac, along with commandos from the PLA's Hong Kong Garrison. In the past, PLA troops stationed in Hong Kong were confined to their barracks, and their movements carried out in low-profile fashion. The PLA previously used airports in Shenzhen and Zhuhai, Guangdong to transport personnel and equipment to and from Hong Kong. (*Asia Times*, October 29, 2018)

XINJIANG CAMPAIGN DRAWS PAKISTANI IRE

China's ongoing crackdown on its Uighur Muslim minority is drawing international condemnation. Last month, Pakistan's religious affairs minister Pir Noorul Haq Qadri said in a meeting with China's ambassador Yao Jing that China should soften restrictions on Muslims in Xinjiang. After Husain Haqqani, the former Pakistani ambassador to the U.S., retweeted a report about how detainees in the Xinjiang camps were required to eat pork, he was denounced as "corrupt" and "without soul" by China's deputy ambassador to Pakistan, Zhao Lijian. To address the international outcry, Xinjiang governor Shohrat Zakir said the camps are "professional vocational training institutions" that also include "de-extremization education." China's embassy in Islamabad further hosted a public meeting of leaders of overseas Chinese associations and other front groups to support Beijing's narrative. Consul general Shen Zicheng, who chaired the meeting, explained that thanks to "counterterrorism and stability maintenance" efforts and "vocational skills education and training, Xinjiang is stable and harmonious, everyone lives in peace and contentment, and all social activities are developing in an all-round way." Xinjiang's "struggle against terrorism," Shen said, had achieved "major milestones" under the "strong leadership of the Central Committee with comrade Xi Jinping as the core." (*South China Morning Post*, October 17, 2018)

AS MYANMAR WORRIES ABOUT CHINESE INFLUENCE, JAPAN STEPS IN

China-Myanmar bilateral trade hit \$10.8 billion in 2016-2017, and \$7.42 billion in the first eight months of fiscal 2017-2018. Beijing is also creating a trade-promotion infrastructure "corridor" through Myanmar connecting Yunnan to the Indian Ocean. But Beijing's growing influence is causing concerns in Naypyidaw. Last month, Myanmar announced it planned to scale back the scope of the China-backed Kyaukphyu deep-water port, initially projected to cost \$7.3 billion, to around \$1.3 billion. Myanmar's heavy dependence on China was highlighted when Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, the commander-in-chief of the armed forces and its de facto ruler, told cadets at the National Defense College in the nation's capital on October 8th that "Myanmar is an independent and sovereign nation...if a country accepts influence and interference of another country, the former will not be a sovereign country."

Japan, meanwhile, is taking advantage of Myanmar's trepidation. At the Tokyo-Mekong Summit in early October, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe pledged \$625 million for traffic congestion projects and drainage and sewage systems in Yangon, as well as economic development in Rakhine state. (*Asia Times*, October 18, 2018)

A NEW ERA FOR BEIJING-TOKYO TIES

Two days before Shinzo Abe's visit to Beijing in late October, the first such visit by a Japanese premier in seven years, Tokyo formally discontinued its official development assistance to China. The program, which began with the signing of the China-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship in 1979, has provided China with \$32.6 billion in low-interest loans, aid and technical cooperation for infrastructure, humanitarian support, and environmental protection over the past forty years. Low-interest loans, which have accounted for more than 90 percent of Japan's assistance to China, helped finance international airports in Beijing and Shanghai and electrified 5,200 kilometers of railway. Tokyo's grants have further funded projects that have included schools and drinking water systems.

Today, however, ties between Tokyo and Beijing are turning more to commercial trade. During Abe's visit, more than 50 business deals worth in excess of \$18 billion were signed – a development that "signaled Japan's support for the Belt and Road initiative," says Wang Shaopu of Shanghai Jiao Tong University. Tourism between the two countries is also booming; more than 10 million Chinese tourists will visit Japan in 2018, up 36 percent from 2017. Nevertheless, residual animosity remains. As one Japanese student in China puts it, "it is difficult, if ever possible for Japanese who grew up with media reports of China's anti-Japanese protests, to be fond of China." (*Global Times*, October 30, 2018)