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CHINA PLACES EMPHASIS ON PATRIOTIC NAMES

As part of Xi Jinping's efforts to "sinicize" China, provinces and cities around the country are issuing notices forcing businesses, bridges, streets and neighborhoods to abandon foreign names. The campaign began in April with a notice from the Ministry of Civil Affairs and five other ministries bemoaning the "ugly social influence" of foreign names and calling for them to be changed to "serve national sovereign rights." Previously, Hainan's Civil Affairs Department ordered that 84 both public and private names including hotels, neighborhoods, cinemas, roads and bridges be changed because they reflect "worshipping and having blind faith in foreign things." You Yunting, a Shanghai-based intellectual property lawyer, said the name-correction campaign "is trampling the law," because many private names are registered trademarks. (Associated Press, June 21, 2019)

PLA NAVY NOT BUILDING A BASE IN CAMBODIA: DEFENSE MINISTER

"There is no such thing as for China to establish its military presence in Cambodia," Defense Minister Wei Fenghe told the recent Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore. In 2008, China's Union Development Group (UDG) was granted 45,000 hectares of land in Koh Kong province, including 20 percent of Cambodia's coastline. The deep-water port UDG is now building will be large enough to host frigates and destroyers; although UDG's Deputy President, Wang Chao, denies it will become a PLA naval base. Nevertheless, the recently updated U.S. Department of Defense Indo-Pacific Strategy expressed concerns "that China is seeking to establish bases or a military presence on its [Cambodian] coast." Last November, Prime Minister Hun Sen said Cambodia would not host foreign military bases. (*Voice of America*, June 3, 2019)

A RARE RECOGNITION OF TIANANMEN

Defense Minister Wei Fenghe has defended the bloody crackdown on protesters around Beijing's Tiananmen Square 30 years ago and called it the "correct policy." Speaking at the Shangri-La Dialogue, Wei said: "Everybody is concerned about Tiananmen after 30 years. Throughout the 30 years, China under the Communist Party has undergone many changes - do you think the government was wrong with the handling of June fourth? There was a conclusion to that incident. The government was decisive in stopping the turbulence. There was political turmoil that the central government needed to quell, which was the correct policy. Due to this, China has enjoyed stability, and if you visit China you can understand that part of history." The comments represent a rare acknowledgement of the regime's crackdown on pro-Democracy protests in 1989 – a topic that remains heavily censored in China. (*Al Jazeera*, June 2, 2019)

TWITTER APOLOGIZES FOR BLOCKED ANTI-CHINA ACCOUNTS

Follows a storm of criticism, including from U.S. Senator Marco Rubio, who accused Twitter of becoming "a Chinese (government) censor," the social media firm apologized for suspending the accounts of users that posted comments critical of Beijing in the lead up to the 30th anniversary of the crackdown on pro-Democracy protesters in Tiananmen Square. Twitter said the users' suspensions were not connected to any action from China. Users were mistakably flagged as part of a "routine action" against "platform manipulation," and Twitter said it was working to "ensure we overturn any errors." (Reuters, June 2, 2019)

MILITARY TIES A LINCHPIN OF SINO-RUSSIAN RELATIONS

China and Russia should "develop their two armies into 'special friendly forces,'" wrote Wang Haiyan, who served as the PLA's top representative in Russia for more than a decade, in an official editorial. Wang identified five fields of close bilateral military cooperation: technology and arms, border security, education and training, joint exercises, and military theories under high-tech conditions. He said the PLA "should learn more from the Russian instead of the U.S. army," because its weaponry "is basically the same as Russia's," and because both militaries share common views on "geopolitics," "international military security," and "adopt strategic defensive positions." "China's military theory has borrowed extensively from the Soviet as well as Russian armies," Wang said. (*Global Times*, June 4, 2019)