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August 11, 2020 Joshua Eisenman

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PAKISTAN SIGNS A FLURRY OF BRI DEALS

China and Pakistan have inked two deals for two new hydropower projects costing \$3.9 billion in the disputed Kashmir region, and another to revamp the nation's colonial-era railways for \$7.2 billion – China's biggest project yet in Pakistan. "The prime minister pushed very hard on this," premier Imran Khan's economic adviser, Abdul Razak Dawood, has said. According to the Center for Global Development, Pakistan is among eight countries which will face problems servicing their debt to China. Over the next three years, Islamabad must repay Beijing more than twice what it owes the International Monetary Fund. (*Bloomberg*, July 15, 2020)

STATE DEPARTMENT: U.S. CITIZENS IN CHINA FACE "ARBITRARY" ARREST

"U.S. citizens [in China] may be detained without access to U.S. consular services or information about their alleged crime," reads a new U.S. State Department advisory notice. Exit bans and long interrogations are also potential threats to U.S. citizens. The State Department described China's approach as "arbitrary enforcement of local laws for purposes other than maintaining law and order." The Department cautioned against the threat of deportation or detainment "for sending private electronic messages critical" of the government. Australia and Canada have also issued travel warnings over fears of arbitrary detentions. (*Deutsche Welle*, July 12, 2020)

INDIA STOPS CHINA'S FIRMS FROM BIDDING ON GOVERNMENT TENDERS

India has imposed restrictions on public procurement that effectively ban China from participating in public tenders on national security grounds. India's Department of Expenditure has amended the country's "General Financial Rules 2017" to restrict nations that share a land border with India from bidding on government tenders. As per the order, any bidder from a bordering country must register with authorities to be eligible to bid in any official procurement, whether for goods, services, or construction works. (*Financial Express*, July 23, 2020)

XI CONSOLIDATES CONTROL OVER LAW ENFORCEMENT BEFORE 2022 CONGRESS

Xi Jinping is reshuffling the staff of the Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission, the powerful party organ that supervises all police, national security, judicial, prosecution agencies and courts. The Commission's secretary-general and Xi's trusted aide, Chen Yixin, announced the nationwide campaign to "rectify education" to "scrape the poison off the bones" of politicians and law enforcement officials on July 8th. One list of people charged with wrongdoing includes more than 100 senior prosecutors and judges across the country. Among those recently charged is Sun Lijun, a former deputy minister of public security who was close to former commission secretary Meng Jianzhu. Meanwhile, in April, Tang Yijun, another Xi loyalist, was appointed Minister of Justice. The campaign is to be completed before the much anticipated 2022 Party Congress. (*Nikkei Asian Review*, July 22, 2020)

CHINA CLOSES U.S. CONSULATE IN CHENGDU

China has ordered the closure of the U.S. consulate in Chengdu and accused its staff of "interfering in China's internal affairs, and endangering China's security and interests." China said the move was in response to the U.S. closing its consulate in Houston over espionage concerns. Established in 1985, the mission, which had had a staff of 200, including 150 locals, had allowed the U.S. to better understand Tibet and other Western regions. The announcement came just after Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told a group at the Nixon Library: "Today, China is increasingly authoritarian at home, and more aggressive in its hostility to freedom everywhere else. The free world must triumph over this new tyranny." (*BBC*, July 24, 2020)