



## China Reform Monitor No. 1429

August 19, 2020 **Joshua Eisenman**

**Related Categories:** Cybersecurity and Cyberwarfare; Democracy and Governance; Human Rights and Humanitarian Issues; Intelligence and Counterintelligence; International Economics and Trade; Corruption; China; India; Southeast Asia; Taiwan

### **TAIWAN INKS DEAL FOR 66 F-16s**

Taiwan has signed an agreement to buy 66 F-16 jets from Lockheed Martin Corp. The purchase marks the first sale of advanced fighter jets to the island since 1992, when President George H.W. Bush gave approval for Taiwan to acquire 150 F-16s. The jets will be completed in 2026 and equipped with the APG-83, a top-line fire control radar that allows precision-guided munitions to be fired at greater distances. (*Bloomberg*, August 14, 2020)

### **NEW TAIWAN PASSPORT DESIGN UP FOR PUBLIC VOTE**

On July 22, Taiwan's Legislative Yuan passed a resolution to emphasize both the Mandarin and English words for "Taiwan" over "China" on its new passport cover and in the name of the nation's flagship air carrier. On July 30, a shortlist of proposed passport designs was announced and uploaded to [Taiwanpassport.tw](http://Taiwanpassport.tw) for public voting between August 1 and 30. The finalists were chosen by a panel of judges and the winner will be announced at a ceremony held the first week of September at the Olympus Plaza Taipei. The five criteria for the initial selection are said to have been: design philosophy, aesthetics, innovation, the reflection of Taiwanese society, and imaginativeness. Many entries incorporate elements of Taiwanese culture, such as plum blossoms, Formosan swallowtails, Yushan, the Formosan black bear, the Formosan sika deer, the Taiwan blue pheasant, the Taiwan blue magpie, bubble tea, whales, braised pork over rice, and maps of the island. (*Taiwan News*, August 7, 2020)

### **GOOGLE PULLS 2,500 OF CHINA'S DISINFORMATION YOUTUBE CHANNELS**

As part of efforts to weed out disinformation on its video-sharing platform, Google has deleted more than 2,500 YouTube channels tied to China's foreign influence campaigns. The channels were removed between April and June of this year as part of the tech giant's "ongoing investigation into coordinated influence operations linked to China." Google did not identify the specific channels banned and provided few other details, although it did link the videos to similar activity spotted by Twitter and to another disinformation campaign it uncovered in April. (Reuters, August 5, 2020)

### **FORMER MALAYSIAN MINISTER ARRESTED ON CHINA-LINKED GRAFT CHARGES**

Former Malaysian finance minister Lim Guan Eng has been arrested for corruption in the construction of a China-linked \$1.5 billion undersea tunnel connecting Penang island to the mainland peninsula. Lim spent the night in detention before appearing in court to face three separate charges under the country's anti-corruption law. The reclamation project, which is now underway, was signed during Lim's 2008–2018 tenure as Penang's chief minister. It involves using reclaimed land to finance the construction of the tunnel, roads and a metro. In 2013, the construction tender was awarded to a consortium that included China's Beijing Urban Construction Group and Malaysia's Zenith Construction. The China Railway Construction Company is now the project's engineering, procurement, commissioning and construction contractor. (*South China Morning Post*, August 6, 2020)

### **INDIA RAIDS CHINESE SHELL COMPANIES FOR MONEY LAUNDERING**

India's tax authorities have raided the premises of several Chinese entities and their associates on money laundering charges. "Search action revealed that at the behest of Chinese individuals, more than 40 bank accounts were created in various dummy entities, entering into credits of more than 10 billion rupees (\$134 million) over the period," read the official statement. It laid out that one of the Chinese company's subsidiaries had taken more than 1 billion rupees in bogus advances from shell entities ostensibly to open "retail showrooms" in India. The statement did not, however, mention the names of the companies or of the Chinese individuals involved in money laundering, or identify any motives beyond tax evasion. "Further investigations are under progress," it concluded. (*Straits Times*, August 11, 2020)