



CHINA REFORM MONITOR

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UNREST ON THE CHINA-MYANMAR BORDER

As part of their military campaign against the country's ruling *junta*, a coalition of ethnic fighters in Myanmar have seized several crossings along the common border with China over the past month. Beijing has responded to the rebellion, which has cut off nearly all bilateral trade between the two nations, by calling for a cease-fire, firing tear gas to drive away people near the border fence, and conducting several days of live-fire military drills to "safeguard border security." China supports the *junta* in Naypyidaw and wants to prevent the conflict from spilling over the border, which is already rife with drug and human trafficking. (Associated Press, November 28, 2023)

META REMOVES CHINA'S ONLINE INFLUENCE NETWORKS

According to social media giant Meta, China is using Facebook and Instagram to manipulate people in Africa, Central Asia, Europe, and the U.S. So far this year, the firm has removed five Chinese fake account networks, more than those of any other country. The campaigns vary widely, but all were promoting Beijing's interests and attacking its critics. One network that Meta took down had 4,800 Facebook accounts impersonating Americans and posting on U.S. domestic politics and U.S.-China relations. Another targeted Tibet and India and had Facebook accounts posing as journalists, lawyers, and human rights activists. "They are using many different tactics. We've seen small operations that try and build personas. We've seen larger operations using large, clunky, sort of spammy networks. The common denominator, other than origin in China, is really that they're all struggling to get any kind of authentic audience," says Ben Nimmo, Meta's head of global threat intelligence. (NPR, November 30, 2023)

UKRAINE DESTROYS KEY RAILWAY LINKING CHINA AND RUSSIA

Ukraine's SBU security service has carried out an attack on the most important rail route connecting China and Russia. Four explosive devices were detonated while a freight train was traveling through the Bessolov Severomuysky Tunnel on the Baikal-Amur Mainline in Buryatia, Russia. The explosion has halted, among other things, imports of Chinese military supplies along the trade route. (*New Voice of Ukraine*, November 30, 2023)

U.S. LAWMAKERS FEAR A "FLOOD" OF CHINESE EVS FROM MEXICO

U.S. lawmakers fear that Chinese car companies BYD, Chery, and SAIC Motors are setting up operations in Mexico to "flood the U.S. and global markets with automobiles, particularly EVs, propped up by massive subsidies and long-standing localization and other discriminatory policies." Writing to U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai, a bipartisan group of four Members of Congress claimed the USMCA free trade pact offers Chinese exporters "a back door" into the U.S., and called on the administration to "address the coming wave of [Chinese] vehicles that will be exported from our other trading partners, such as Mexico, [to] circumvent any [China]-specific tariffs." (*Mexico News Daily*, November 28, 2023)

CHINA EASES ITS PRESSURE CAMPAIGN ON LITHUANIA

After two years, China is easing its economic and diplomatic pressure on Lithuania, according to Foreign Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis. "Following discussions and various diplomatic processes most of the economic pressure measures against Lithuania have been lifted," Landsbergis said, adding that "businesses are not choosing China as a partner because of previous experiences and understanding that the country uses the economy as a tool." Lithuanian shipments to China were up 53% over the first 10 months of 2023 to \$110 million; although they remain 71% lower than the first 10 months of 2021, when trade was halted after Vilnius allowed the opening of the Taiwanese Representative Office. That "office is not part of our discussions with Beijing," Landsbergis said. Beijing's change of heart comes just before a new anti-coercion retaliatory trade tool is set to take effect that would allow Brussels to respond with tariffs, quotas, or market bans. Last week, China's ambassador to the EU, Fu Cong, admitted that Beijing had punished Lithuania for challenging "one of the fundamental principles of Chinese foreign policy." (*South China Morning Post*, November 29, 2023)