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BRIEFS

AFRICA: As Chinese Involvement Continues, Some Express Concern

Summary: With the large and ever-expanding Chinese influence in Africa, the African Development Bank (AfDB) announced its concerns regarding China's lack of investment to progress and transform Africa as opposed to China's current exploitation and impact on African resources. While efforts continue by the AfDB and others to develop Sub-Saharan African economies through investment and entrepreneurship, the scale of the development challenges probably ensures that most of the countries will continue to accept Chinese involvement.

Development: On 28 October, AfDB Senior Director Ebrima Faal expressed concern regarding Africa's economic relationship with China, fearing it may lead to a new debt crisis in Africa. Beijing's loans have already created high debt distress in the Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, and Zambia, and in September, China pledged \$60 billion more in loans, aid, and investment to Africa. Additionally, about 10,000 Chinese-owned corporations currently operate across Africa, which have forced many African industries to close due to their lack of technology, leading China to gain economic power in Africa's markets. Faal claims such continued involvement will allow China to locate and control a giant portion of African resources and its market. Acknowledging this, the African Economic Merit Awards (AEMA) has promoted new jobs, innovations, and entrepreneurship in African communities, and is pushing for growth in technology for security in resources and cyber to protect and grow African states' economies and development.

Analysis: AEMA's proactive efforts in advancing local economies, technologies, and security likely reflect its attempt to counter Chinese involvement in Africa. Despite Beijing's claims that it will not interfere with African countries' economies, new Chinese projects still pose problems for their African beneficiaries as these African states will eventually have to repay Chinese loans. Additionally, Chinese growth will also likely result in a greater exploitation of Africa's resources and workforce as Beijing will most likely continue investing in and offering loans to African nations to maintain its direct access to Africa's natural resources. Although AEMA may continue to attempt to push China out of Africa, China will likely remain active in its investments and projects. If AEMA's efforts in improving African markets, technologies, and security yield successful and fruitful results, African nations could possibly gain the self-sufficiency and self-reliance to lean further away from Chinese aid and involvement. Nonetheless, given the scale of their development needs, most African nations will more likely continue to accept Chinese capital to improve their societies, economies, and general well-being despite the adverse effects.

[Allyson Campbell]

BRAZIL: Foreign Policy Reformation Likely Bolsonaro's First Big Move

Summary: Rightwing candidate Jair Bolsonaro won Brazil's presidential election and will take office on 1 January 2019. Bolsonaro will probably use foreign policy reformation to rebuild economic relationships to initiate recovery from ongoing domestic challenges.

Development: On 28 October, Bolsonaro secured a victory in Brazil's final round of presidential elections, winning the presidency with 55.1% of the votes and breaking the trend of a four-term-long leftist administration. Left-wing candidate Fernando Haddad received 44.9% of votes. Bolsonaro represents the far-right wing of the Social Liberal Party and caught the public's attention through his lack of political correctness and haste to make highly controversial statements expressing racism, sexism, and homophobia. His popularity in the polls appeared to gain new momentum after his survival of an assassination attempt on 6 September by a leftist attacker. As Brazil's president-elect, Bolsonaro will take office on 1 January 2019. Bolsonaro has expressed his ambition to eliminate ideology from foreign policy negotiations to obtain strictly economic ties with trading partners and to mitigate conflict that could arise through multilateral forums.

Analysis: During his transition into the presidency, Bolsonaro will likely focus much of his attention on Brazil's foreign policy to rebuild Brazil's international credibility. He will likely appoint military officials to key government roles to combat the status quo of corrupt establishment politicians in the government and to possibly improve Brazil's reputation on the world stage. Although Bolsonaro has not yet named his Minister of Foreign Affairs as the administration transitions on the congressional level, Bolsonaro will likely begin to act on foreign policy reformation, considering his executive authority holds significant autonomy over foreign affairs. Considering Brazil's main economic niche is exporting commodities, Bolsonaro will likely promote bilateral trade agreements to maintain balanced relationships with the world's largest economies—China and the US—to manage its middle-man status in the ensuing trade dispute. He will probably favor the maintenance of state-controlled strategic industries, such as large exporters, to promote both nationalism and international investment. Bolsonaro's proposals could possibly offer a path to recovery from the years-long massive corruption investigation at the hands of the leftist Worker's Party so that Brazil can at last focus on healing domestic issues and repairing foreign economic relations.

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GERMANY: Merkel Will Not Seek Re-election, Hinting at Change for German Politics

Summary: German Chancellor Angela Merkel announced that she will not run for re-election, opening the door for German politics to shift further to the right.

Development: On 29 October, Merkel announced that she will not seek re-election in 2021 and will step down as party head of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), following significant

losses in recent elections. Merkel has served as Chancellor since 2005, and party head since 2000. Potential candidates to replace Merkel include CDU Secretary General, Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, Health Minister Jens Spahn, and former parliamentary leader of the CDU, Friedrich Merz. Both Spahn and Merz fall within the party's conservative wing, while many refer to Kramp-Karrenbauer as a "mini Merkel." The CDU will choose a new party leader in December, but voters will not elect a new chancellor until 2021.

Analysis: Merkel's retirement from politics likely signifies the end to a political paradigm in Germany, which could potentially open the door for politics to shift further right. Many in Germany see Merkel's centrist platform as a compromise, while new right-wing candidates may attempt to shift the national debate in Merkel's absence. Recent elections worldwide have shown a dramatic shift towards nationalism in previous years, and Germany will likely continue this trend. The CDU remains the most popular party in Germany and will likely stay the most popular in the short term—however, the political leanings of Merkel's successor may shift the ideology of the party. If Kramp-Karrenbauer is elected as party leader, she will likely not attempt to drastically change its current policies, though others may feel emboldened to challenge her given she possesses less political experience than Merkel. If Spahn or Merz is elected, they may change or reverse some of Merkel's more contested laws, such as the ban on nuclear power or her somewhat lenient policy allowing refugees and immigrants into Germany. Rightwing candidates may attempt to draw support from these populist issues by promising to move away from the current centrist solutions, which carry the perception of a compromise that satisfies no one.

[Alli McIntyre]

[SAUDI ARABIA: External Financing of Pakistan Could Provide Leverage Against Iran](#)

Summary: Riyadh agreed to provide financial support to bail out the Pakistani economy. This loan could constitute a Saudi attempt to salvage the economy of an important ally against Iran.

Development: On 23 October, Saudi King Salman met with Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan in Riyadh and agreed to loan Islamabad \$3 billion to support the Pakistani economy, as well as to defer oil payments for a period of one year, worth an additional \$3 billion. King Salman offered this support to stave off a budget crisis in Islamabad. Khan's visit to Riyadh for the Future Investment Initiative also led to his announcement that negotiations have begun between Islamabad and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a new bailout. Pakistani shares jumped 3.3% after the pledge of funds by Riyadh. Historically, Riyadh and Islamabad have had close and friendly bilateral relations, partially due to their shared Sunni majorities, while Iran holds a Shia majority, supporting the Houthi rebels in Yemen in their fight against the Saudi-UAE Coalition.

Analysis: Riyadh probably loaned Islamabad the \$6 billion to maintain a strong political, economic, and Sunni ally against Shia Iran, perhaps with the intention of surrounding Iran with

Sunni countries that have considerable ties to Saudi Arabia. This move by Riyadh follows a greater trend of competition between Saudi Arabia and Iran as leaders in the Arab world on the two opposing sides of Islam. Considering Tehran gives Houthis in Yemen supplies and support to fight the Saudi-UAE Coalition, Riyadh likely is trying to do the same by increasing influence in Islamabad to establish a foothold to Iran's west. Due to Saudi Arabia's support, its ally, the UAE will likely provide monetary support to Pakistan following an upcoming meeting between UAE delegates and Pakistani officials. These contributions would alleviate Pakistan's dependence on the IMF.

[Meg Pfaff]

SRI LANKA: Political Crisis Leaves Opening for Unrest and Chinese Influence

Summary: President Maithripala Sirisena fired Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, his cabinet, and suspended parliament. By appointing former president Mahinda Rajapaksa as the new Prime Minister, Sri Lanka will likely drift further into Chinese influence.

Development: On 30 October, the coalition government of Sri Lanka fell apart following internal disputes over policy. Wickremesinghe has refused to leave office in the wake of Sirisena assuming full control of government and appointing Rajapaksa as Prime Minister, who was defeated by Sirisena and Wickremesinghe in a 2015 election. The Chinese government welcomed the new prime minister appointment. The current constitutional crisis extends into parliament with each side possessing an equal number of seats.

Analysis: The current situation will prove difficult for any party to regain power unless the country's supreme court decides who rightfully has power. Sirisena likely added Rajapaksa to the new government to anger the Sri Lankan people and cause further protests. During Rajapaksa's 10-year term, Sri Lanka moved closer to China, a move seen by India as a potential conflict. While Rajapaksa led Sri Lanka, he accepted Chinese gifts in the form of a warship, port ownerships, and Chinese lobbying on the behalf of Rajapaksa. Although his disputed appointment as prime minister could lead to a more permanent role in the government, the military who did not back him in the past could potentially give its support to Wickremesinghe. Historically, the Sri Lankan Military has backed and given its support to the group that it feels has legitimate power; however, with both sides equally having the same amount of political power, the decision will likely lie with the court.

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TUNISIA: Bombing May Result in Heightened Security Measures to Protect Economy

Summary: A pattern of terrorist activity within Tunisia has continued as a suicide bomber attacked Tunis. The Tunisian government will likely enhance security policy and practices to suppress home-based terrorist groups and protect Tunisia's economic interests.

Development: On 29 October, a suicide bombing near Le Palmarium shopping center in Tunis, injured eight policemen and one civilian. No group claimed responsibility for the attack and the bomber had no known previous militant connections. Following two deadly terrorist attacks in 2015, the Tunisian government bolstered security measures throughout the country and enacted a state of emergency in order to repress the four home-based terrorist groups within Tunisia. Subsequently, terrorist activities within Tunisia decreased until this year, while the state of emergency continues following another extension.

Analysis: Tunisia almost certainly will continue to bolster security measures to diminish the possibility of future terrorist activities. Future security policies similar to post-2015 policy decisions, which reinforced surveillance programs in maritime borders and airports, may influence tourism, which accounts for approximately 8% of the country's GDP. These policies probably will produce a growth of the country's security forces within tourist sites as well as along its borders with Libya and Algeria. Also, the Tunisian government will likely crack down on foreign visitors, particularly from Libya and Syria, due to their prevalence of militant groups. Due to the recent terrorist attacks, Tunisia almost certainly will continue to favor security and stability over political and social freedoms, which will likely strain but not destroy its liberal tendencies, more apparent since the Arab Spring.

[Riley Coder]

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