

Headlines:

- **China to Build Military Base in Afghanistan**
- **The Battle for Idlib has begun**
- **New Scramble for Africa**

Details:

China to Build Military Base in Afghanistan

Evidence has surfaced that China may have started building a training base in northern Afghanistan's Badakhshan province. China was quick to deny the reports, but this is standard practice for Beijing when it wants to downplay its slowly expanding overseas military presence. This was a similar strategy China utilised a similar strategy before it opened a naval base in Djibouti. China is also denying its small presence in Syria as Chinese concerns grow over the potential outflow of Uighur fighters from the Syrian battlefield. For the US it has long argued China benefits from the international system but doesn't bear the costs of providing security for the system it has benefited from. In Afghanistan the US has for long been looking for other nations to pick up the burden in order to stabilise the country.

The Battle for Idlib has begun

Russia resumed air strikes in northwestern Syria on Sep 4th ahead of an expected assault by pro-government forces on rebel-held Idlib province. Russian warplanes carried out 30 raids targeting 16 areas in the border region between Idlib and Latakia provinces, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, the UK-based, pro-opposition monitor. Idlib is the last bastion of a group of an estimated 70,000 rebels who have been corralled in the province as the Syrian government has gradually regained territory claimed by opposition groups since an uprising against Bashar al-Assad began in 2011. Turkey's army has established a series of observation posts along the border between Idlib and Syrian government-held territory and will be playing a key role in ensuring North Idlib is secured. These Military positions have been recently fitted with anti-air defences, concrete walls as well as the building of hospitals and a helicopter field. Whilst many rebel groups are viewing Turkey as someone who will help them in the battle for Idlib, it remains to be seen if Turkey follows through on this.

New Scramble for Africa

At the opening of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), Chinese President Xi Jinping announced an additional \$60 billion package of aid, investment and loans for African countries. The FOCAC has been held every three years since 2000 and has often resulted in announcements of major financing or policies. Xi also announced a \$60 billion package for African countries at the summit in 2015. The Chinese premier attempted to offer the latest financial package without conditions and by waiving the debts of Africa's poorest states. This is an attempt to deal with the perception that's China is just the recent example of powerful states imposing on the Continent. Sri Lanka has now learnt the hard way that China does not give money as a humanitarian, but expects something in return. Usually access to resources, ports and mineral resources.