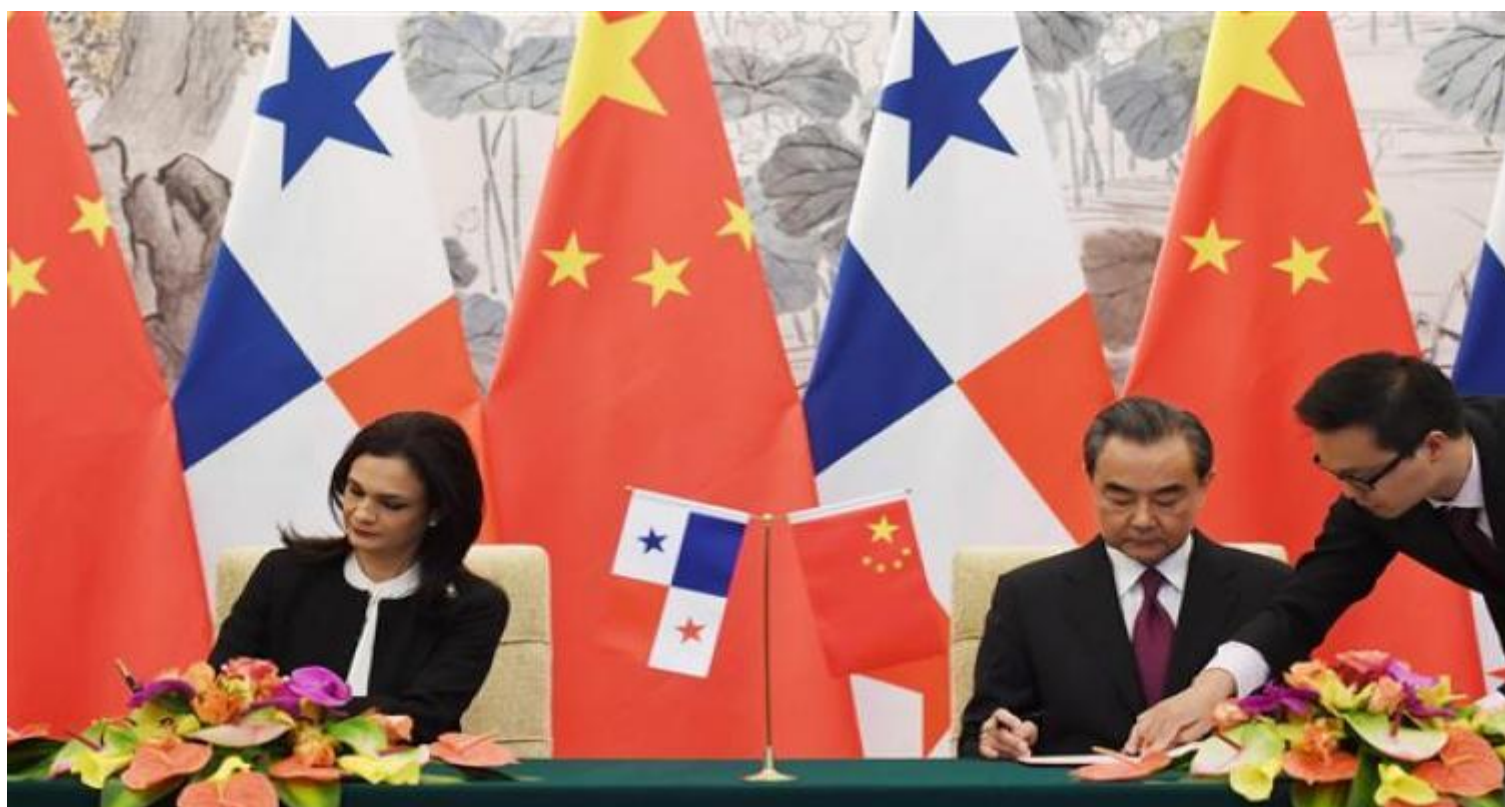


Panama Cuts Ties with Taiwan, Establishes Diplomatic Relations with China



Beijing, June 13 (RHC)-- Panama has broken diplomatic ties with Taiwan in favor of establishing formal relations with Beijing. The Panama City government said in a statement that it recognized there is only one China, and that Taiwan is part of the Asian giant. The statement read: "The Panamanian government is today breaking its diplomatic ties with Taiwan, and pledges to end all relations or official contact with Taiwan."

Panamanian President Juan Carlos Varela also said in a televised address that "Panama and China establish diplomatic relations today."

On Tuesday, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and his Panamanian counterpart Isabel Saint Malo de Alvarado signed a joint communiqué establishing ties in Beijing. "This is a historic moment, China-Panama relations have opened a new chapter," Wang said. He added that Panama's decision was in "complete accord" with its people's interests and "in keeping with the times."

China's Foreign Ministry also said in a statement on its website: "The two countries' governments agreed to develop good friendly relations on the principles of mutual respecting sovereignty and territorial

integrity, non-aggression, mutual non-interference in internal affairs, mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence.”

Panama is the latest country to cut relations with Taiwan, bringing the number of the countries that formally recognize the island down to 20.

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