Twitter Thread by Lauri Myllyvirta

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This is as big as it gets in China's energy policy: An environmental inspection authorized by the Party Central Committee has been carried out at the National Energy Agency, and the final report is BRUTAL in calling out failure to rein in

The NEA gets scolded for failing to control coal power capacity in air pollution priority areas, loosening the "traffic lights" for new coal power plants, not enforcing closure of old capacity when new is added, and for expansion of energy-intensive industry in the east.

Expect a new clampdown on coal power projects in the east, with suspensions or cancellations of already permitted projects, and particularly a new drive to control captive coal power plants.

On clean energy, the NEA has not sufficiently prioritized clean and low-carbon energy transformation in the draft energy law and electricity law revision.

The Administration has also failed to coordinate clean energy development to feed the long-distance transmission lines from west to east - 2 of the 14 lines only carried 1% clean energy. These verdicts should be a major boon to clean energy development.

Most damningly, the NEA is found to have ideologically deviated from Xi Jinping thought on ecology and environment. "Some comrades" think the most important thing is to ensure energy supply, and environmental requirements just increase costs and solutions aren't yet available.

It's not all bad news for coal - the inspection report also calls for speeding up coal power build in the western coal power bases & to increase imports of power from west to east. This will help with air pollution in the east but not with CO2 or overall air pollutant emissions.

As pointed out in the article above, this verdict makes it clear that energy supply and environmental goals are to have equal weight in China's energy policy.

My question through all of the bad news on the fossil fuel building spree has been where does the top leadership come down on this - did Xi Jinping make his climate pledges to greenwash the short-term increase in emissions or is he serious

about turning the ship?

A move like this is authorized from the very top - so we have the first answer.

In terms of politics, this is completely reshuffling the power dynamics between environment ministry and economic planners. So far, energy and economic planning has steered the ship and environmental officials have been left to clean up in its wake. Not anymore.

The inspection team reported to the small leading group on environmental inspections, chaired by vice premier Han Zheng.

Remember the previous time that the issue got kicked up to this level - vice premier Zhang Gaoli driving the National Air Pollution Action Plan process in 2013, forcing provinces to agree to tough targets and measures.

My big expectation from the autumn's high-level meetings has been that the environmental ministry would be empowered to drive action through the "CO2 peaking action plan" they are preparing. This move shows they have the mandate to implement; now we need to see the ambition.

As always, worth seeing what @LiShuo_GP makes of this - great points
https://t.co/cif0r0uPaI

> A SIGNIFICANT move that bears HUGE political implications for China's envi governance, air pollution, & coal development. On Jan 29, the central environmental inspection group (CEIP) released findings on its inspection at the National Energy Administration (NEA). Thread. pic.twitter.com/iixIRFmMWc
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> — Li Shuo_Greenpeace (@LiShuo_GP) January 30, 2021