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Related Categories: Democracy and Governance; Economic Sanctions; Human Rights and Humanitarian Issues; Missile Defense; China; Iran; Japan; North Korea; Russia

U.S. CALLS ON COUNTRIES NOT TO REPATRIATE UIGHURS TO CHINA...

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has called China's campaign against Uighurs in Xinjiang an "attempt to erase its own citizens" and implored all countries to resist China's demands to repatriate ethnic Uighurs. China's official Foreign Ministry spokesperson said Pompeo had slandered China, and that its policies in Xinjiang are no different than what other countries do to prevent extremism and terrorism. (Reuters, September 22, 2019)

...AND SANCTIONS CHINESE COMPANIES FOR IMPORTING IRANIAN OIL

The U.S. has sanctioned several Chinese companies and officials for importing Iranian oil. Two subsidiaries of Cosco, China's largest shipping and logistics company, were blacklisted along with China Concord Petroleum, Pegasus 88 Ltd, Kunlun Shipping Co. and Kunlun Holding Co. after tankers linked to Bank of Kunlun, a subsidiary of China National Petroleum Corp., helped to transport Iranian crude to China. The U.S. sanctions will force western companies to avoid using Cosco tankers covered by the restrictions for fear of being targeted by sanctions themselves. Insurers will also be less likely to cover vessels they fear may be doing business with Iran. Despite the U.S. pressure, however, it is unlikely that China will stop importing Iranian crude, because Beijing does not like to be seen as being bullied by Washington. (Financial Times, September 25, 2019)

CHINA REPLACES DPRK AS JAPAN'S #1 THREAT

China has replaced North Korea as Japan's top security threat, according to Tokyo's new annual Defense White Paper. The report cited China's patrols in waters and skies around Japan as "a national security concern." This is the first time Beijing has replaced North Korea in Japan's threat calculus, with Russia in third place. "China is rapidly increasing military spending, and so people can grasp that we need more pages. China is deploying air and sea assets in the Western Pacific and through the Tsushima Strait into the Sea of Japan with greater frequency," said Defense Minister Taro Kono. In response, China's Foreign Ministry has said that it will not accept Japan's "groundless criticism" of its national defense and military activities. (Reuters, September 26, 2019)

THREE CHINESE NATIONALS CHARGED WITH FENTANYL TRAFFICKING

Three Chinese nationals have been charged with distributing the synthetic opioid drug fentanyl in the United States. Drugs sold by the three defendants have been found in the bodies of at least five overdosed Americans, according to a Justice Department statement. Between April 2016 and March 2017, Chen Deyao, Chen Guichun and Pan Liangtu took thousands of online orders in China and then sent the drugs via the U.S. Postal Service to a former deputy sheriff in Pennsylvania named David Landis for domestic distribution. Landis has pleaded guilty for his part in the scheme and is currently awaiting sentencing. Fentanyl, which is 50 times stronger than heroin, along with other synthetic opioids, killed 32,000 Americans in 2018. "China is supplying the United States with the most potent and deadly fentanyl and other synthetic opioids on the market today," U.S. Attorney William McSwain said in his statement. (Straits Times, October 2, 2019)

MOSCOW HELPING BEIJING BUILD ADVANCED MISSILE WARNING SYSTEM

Russia is helping China to build a missile-attack warning system that will drastically increase PLA capabilities, President Vladimir Putin has said, noting that only Russia and the U.S. currently have such technology. "I don't think I'll open a huge secret here. It'll become clear anyway. We're now helping our Chinese partners to create a missile-attack warning system," Putin told high-profile guests at the 16th meeting of the Valdai Discussion Club at the Black Sea resort of Sochi. The system's ground-based radars and satellite arrays in Earth's orbit detect the launch of ballistic missiles and calculate their trajectory and then transmit the data to a command center, where a decision on how to respond can be made. Putin said that containing China is "impossible by definition," and warned that Washington's "deconstructive and damaging" attempts will only be "harming and delivering damage to themselves." (Russia Today, October 3, 2019)