



China Reform Monitor No. 1404

February 7, 2020 **Joshua Eisenman**

Related Categories: Economic Sanctions; Human Rights and Humanitarian Issues; International Economics and Trade; China; Iran; Russia

FLORIDA SCIENTISTS FIRED FOR HIDING PARTICIPATION IN CHINA PROGRAM...

The Moffitt Cancer Center in Florida has dismissed six senior researchers for hiding the payments they received from Tianjin Medical University Cancer Institute Hospital (TMUCIH) as part of China's "Thousand Talents" program. Moffitt submitted a report to legislators as part of a probe of foreign research collaborations at state-funded universities. It said: "None of the Moffitt faculty who were Talents program participants properly or timely disclosed their Talents program involvement to Moffitt, and none disclosed the full extent of their Talents program activities prior to Moffitt's internal investigation. All Moffitt faculty participants in the Talents programs acknowledged receiving personal payments that they did not promptly disclose to Moffitt. They also acknowledged having opened or maintained personal bank accounts in China to receive Talents program compensation." Those fired include: former Moffitt CEO Alan List; Thomas Sellers, the director of its research program; Daniel Sullivan, head of Moffitt's clinical science program; and Pearlie Epling-Burnette, a cancer biologist. The sixth is pharmacogenomicist Howard McLeod, who had put a Chinese scientist, He Yijing, on Moffitt's payroll for five years. "Dr. He facilitated a wide variety of opportunities and activities in China, both commercial and academic, for himself and McLeod," the report states. The ringleader was immunologist Wei Sheng, a TMUCIH graduate, who came to Moffitt in 1992 and "served as intermediary between Moffitt personnel and TMUCIH, often leading trips and translating communications." (*Science*, January 19, 2020)

...AS HARVARD CHEMISTRY CHAIRMAN IS ARRESTED

Charles M. Lieber, who led a research lab at Harvard University for three decades and received millions in U.S. government grants, was arrested for taking millions of dollars as part of the "Thousand Talents" program. According to the federal complaint, Wuhan University of Technology gave Lieber more than \$1.5 million to set up a research lab in China. Lieber is one of the fathers of nanotechnology and invented wires only a few hundred atoms in diameter that transmit electricity. Lieber faces six months in prison for making false statements to U.S. government agencies, a felony charge. Harvard called the charges "extremely serious" and placed the professor on indefinite administrative leave. Lieber serves as honorary professor at Tsinghua, Peking and Fudan Universities. (*Wall Street Journal*, January 29, 2020)

APPLE: BEIJING'S REQUESTS FOR USER DATA SPIKED IN FIRST HALF OF 2019

Between January 1 and June 30, 2019, China made 25 separate requests from Apple for information relating to 15,700 user accounts – more than any other country and more than double its requests compared to the second half of 2018. Apple complied with 96% of China's requests for user account information. "Account-based requests generally seek details of customers' iTunes or iCloud accounts, such as a name and address; and in certain instances, customers' iCloud content, such as stored photos, email, iOS device backups, contacts or calendars," said Apple's transparency report. In response to Beijing's requests, Apple removed 194 apps from its App Store in the first six months of 2019 – accounting for 90% of its removals worldwide. Although the majority of China's requests related to apps with "pornography and illegal content," in October Apple pulled an app from its Hong Kong App Store after Beijing blamed it for "assisting rioters." (*Technode*, January 21, 2020)

CHINA HAS "NO INTENTION TO PARTICIPATE" IN ARMS TALKS

China has rebuffed a U.S. invitation to participate in trilateral nuclear arms talks with Moscow. The U.S. and Russia have held two rounds of talks aimed at addressing security issues since the collapse of the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces treaty. But China's foreign ministry spokesman said Beijing has "no intention to participate" and accused the U.S. of using China's involvement as "a pretext to shirk and shift its own nuclear disarmament responsibilities." Washington is concerned about a lack of transparency surrounding China's nuclear arsenal, which is expected to double over the next decade, and wants any new disarmament pact to include China. "We have to deal with this serious threat to strategic stability, which is the lack of transparency around China's nuclear stockpile enhancement," said Robert Wood, U.S. Ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. (*The Economic Times*, January 22, 2020)

U.S. SANCTIONS CHINESE COMPANIES FOR "FUNDING IRAN'S TERRORISM"

The U.S. Departments of State and Treasury are sanctioning several of China's companies over their continued importation of Iranian oil. The measures block the sanctioned parties from transferring any U.S.-based assets, and prevent U.S. citizens from transacting with them. According to the U.S. Treasury Department, the targeted entities had "collectively transferred the equivalent of hundreds of millions of dollars" to Iran's National Iranian Oil Company throughout 2019. Following President Donald Trump's decision in 2018 to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal, the U.S. issued waivers to several countries – including China – allowing them continue trading with Iran without penalty while they sought alternative suppliers. When the waivers expired, China's oil imports from Iran fell from \$1.6 billion in April to \$562 million in May 2019 – but commerce has still continued. (*South China Morning Post*, January 25, 2020)