



## China Reform Monitor No. 1426

August 5, 2020 **Joshua Eisenman**

**Related Categories:** Democracy and Governance; Economic Sanctions; Human Rights and Humanitarian Issues; International Economics and Trade; China; Taiwan

### **CHINA FACES MASSIVE FLOODS...**

In the first week of July, torrential rains in Hubei affected some 3.5 million people, resulting in an economic loss of \$644 million. About 100 miles downriver from Wuhan, in Huangmei county, rainfall triggered a landslide that buried nine villagers. In Hubei, Hunan, and Jiangxi, tens of thousands of personnel have been mobilized and thousands of families have been relocated. To ease pressure on the swollen Yangtze River, the Three Gorges Dam is reducing the amount of water it releases downstream. "As long as I can remember, this year is the hardest one for me in the past 50 years," said one Hubei resident. (*Wall Street Journal*, July 9, 2020)

### **...RAISING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE THREE GORGES DAM**

As the Yangtze River, its tributaries and lakes (including Dongting and Poyang) have hit record water levels, a fierce debate has arisen about the Three Gorges Dam. About 2.9 billion cubic meters of floodwater has been stored by the dam, and "detailed scheduling" of water discharges has "effectively reducing the speed and extent of water level rises on the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze," said Vice Minister of Water Resources Ye Jianchun. But others disagree. "One of the major justifications for the Three Gorges Dam was flood control, but less than 20 years after its completion we have the highest floodwater in recorded history. The fact is that it cannot prevent these severe events. The Dam's reservoir does not have the capacity to significantly affect the most severe floods," argues David Shankman at the University of Alabama. Geologist Fan Xiao said the Dam's storage capacity amounts to less than 9% of average floodwater. "It can only partially and temporarily intercept the upstream floods, and is powerless to help with floods caused by heavy rainfall in the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River." (Reuters, July 14, 2020)

### **U.S. ANNOUNCES TAIWAN ARMS DEAL...SO CHINA SANCTIONS LOCKHEED**

The U.S. Defense Security Cooperation Agency has announced a \$620 million U.S. arms package for Taiwan that will include upgrades, logistics support, and technical services for Patriot air-defense missile systems. The Agency said the sale supports Taiwan's "continuing efforts to modernize its armed forces and to maintain a credible defensive capability," without altering the "basic military balance in the region." Taipei noted: "In light of China's recent escalation of military pressure in the Taiwan Strait and throughout the region, this arms package will further solidify Taiwan's high-altitude defense capabilities." In response, China's Foreign Ministry announced that that Beijing "has decided to undertake necessary measures and impose sanctions on the main contractor for this sale, Lockheed Martin." Lockheed Martin has sold some civilian helicopters to Chinese buyers, but U.S. law bars the firm from military sales to China. (*Wall Street Journal*, July 14, 2020)

### **U.S. SANCTIONS TOP PRC OFFICIALS OVER MUSLIM ABUSES**

The U.S. has imposed sanctions, visa bans, and asset freezes on four PRC officials responsible for human rights abuses against Uighur Muslims under the Global Magnitsky Act, a law that allows Washington to target foreign human rights abusers. Chen Quanguo, Party chief in Xinjiang and a Politburo member, is the most senior PRC official the U.S. has ever blacklisted. He took control of Xinjiang in 2016, after developing an extensive network of police surveillance to and quell unrest in Tibet. The three other senior officials are Zhu Hailun, former deputy party secretary in Xinjiang; Wang Mingshan, the director and Communist Party secretary of the Xinjiang Public Security Bureau; and the bureau's former party secretary Huo Liujun. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the U.S. was acting against "horrific and systematic abuses" including forced labor, mass detention and involuntary population control. Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL) said: "For far too long, Chinese officials have not been held accountable for committing atrocities that likely constitute crimes against humanity." (Al-Jazeera, July 9, 2020)

### **...SO CHINA SANCTIONS U.S. LAWMAKERS**

China's Foreign Ministry Spokesperson has announced sanctions against United States Senators Marco Rubio (R-FL), Ted Cruz (R-TX), Congressman Chris Smith (R-NJ), and Sam Brownback, the U.S. ambassador-at-large for international religious freedom. "We urge the U.S. to immediately withdraw its wrong decision, and stop any words and actions that interfere in China's internal affairs and harm China's interests," said the spokesperson. Beijing did not say what its sanctions would entail. (Al-Jazeera, July 13, 2020)