



CHINA REFORM MONITOR

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August 25, 2020 Joshua Eisenman

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TOP U.S. HEALTH OFFICIAL HOLDS MEETING WITH TAIWANESE PRESIDENT

While visiting Taiwan, Alex Azar, the U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary, met with Taiwan's President, Tsai Ing-wen. Azar and his team were met by members of Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as the director general of the Taiwan Centers for Disease Control and the director of the American Institute in Taiwan, the de facto U.S. embassy on the island. Azar said that his trip "demonstrates the robust U.S.-Taiwan partnership on global health and health security, one of many aspects of our comprehensive friendship. We consider Taiwan to be a vital partner, a democratic success story, and a force for good in the world." The historic visit was condemned by Beijing, which regards Taiwan as its territory. (CNN, August 10, 2020)

NEW MUSEUM EXHIBIT PROMOTES "HEROIC" BATTLE AGAINST COVID-19

On August 1st, the National Museum of China kicked off its "Unity of Strength" exhibition of socialist realist style paintings, sculptures and calligraphy that hail the country's "heroic deeds" to contain COVID-19. Outside China, Beijing has been accused of covering up the initial outbreak of the virus, and of silencing early whistleblowers. Inside China, however, the party propaganda machine has relentlessly pushed a positive narrative. "Artists spare no effort to document the heroic deeds of those that did, hailing their great contribution to the cause," said the state-run China Daily. The exhibition, which is set to last for two months, only allows entry to visitors with PRC identity cards, and is thus not accessible to foreigners. (*South China Morning Post*, August 11, 2020)

HK TEXTBOOKS REVISED TO "CORRECT POLITICAL MISCONCEPTIONS"

Hong Kong's education bureau has "sent advice...and the corresponding revisions" to six publishers and eight liberal studies textbooks. The books underwent "voluntary consultancy," which was conducted by a team of education professionals at the education bureau. Revisions included stressing that protestors will be held legally accountable if they violate the law, strengthening the Chinese identity of students, and clarifying that Hong Kong's political system is not based on the "separation of the three powers." (*Global Times*, August 18, 2020)

SEVEN COUNTRIES SUSPEND EXTRADITION TREATIES WITH HONG KONG

The U.S. Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Germany, France and Britain have all halted their extradition agreements with Hong Kong in the wake of China's new national security law over the territory. "These steps underscore our deep concern regarding Beijing's decision to impose the national security law, which has crushed the freedoms of the people of Hong Kong," said a State Department spokesperson. The national security law allows for people in Hong Kong to be prosecuted in mainland China. A few weeks after it was imposed, Hong Kong authorities issued an arrest warrant – citing the national security law – for an American citizen, Samuel Chu. (*South China Morning Post*, August 20, 2020)

AFTER CAI XIA DEFECTION, BEIJING LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN

In the wake of Radio Free Asia's damning interview with Cai Xia, a former professor at the Central Party School of the Central Committee of the CPC, the party has launched an all-out campaign to discredit her and deter any other defections. Cai was stripped of her retirement benefits and state media has branded her "a traitor" and an "extreme dissident" aligned with U.S.-based anti-Chinese foreign forces. This week, the party school held a special meeting to strengthen discipline to prevent "major political incidents" as well as to increase the political and ideological training of retired staff. "Party organizations at all levels and the entire school's faculty and staff should take profound lessons from Cai Xia's serious disciplinary violations," read a school notice. Cai, who is now outside China, responded: "Whatever other people say, I will not be moved. I only care about whether my understanding is right or wrong. If it is wrong, I will fix it. If it is right, no matter what pressure I come under I will persevere." (Radio Free Asia, August 8, 2020; Guardian, August 21, 2020)