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COLLEGE MERGERS SUSPENDED AFTER STUDENT PROTESTS

Authorities in Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Jiangxi have suspended plans to merge colleges with vocational institutes after student protests led to violent confrontations with police. In May 2020, the Education Ministry announced a plan to restructure independent colleges by merging them with vocational schools. When, on June 4th, the Education Ministry announced that it would enforce the merger in 13 independent colleges, students from several of the institutions responded by gathering on their campuses to protest. At Nanjing Normal University, there were confrontations between the students and police who said the students had "illegally detained the dean of the college for more than 30 hours." On June 7th, Jiangsu's education department announced it was suspending the merger after "thousands of students submitted a petition against the plan for fear of losing their competitiveness in the job market." And early on June 8th, all five colleges in Jiangsu posted the suspension of merger plans on their official Weibo accounts. (VOA, June 11, 2021)

CHINA LEADS THE CHARGE AGAINST ISRAEL

China was the leading voice against Israel during the country's recent clashes with the Hamas terrorist group in the Gaza Strip. Beijing co-sponsored the UN Human Rights Council's decision to establish a commission to investigate Israeli "violations in the occupied Palestinian territory." Within a week, China pushed the UN Security Council to hold three emergency sessions at which Foreign Minister Wang Yi faulted Israel, demanded immediate "restraint" and an end to Israeli "hostilities." Wang also criticized the U.S. for "standing on the opposite side of international justice" because it stood by Israel. Meanwhile, China's official CGTV reported that "Jews dominate [U.S.] finance, media, and Internet sectors," and China's diplomats shared anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic posts on Twitter. China's UN ambassador, Zhang Jun, for example, shared posts supporting Palestinian violence and accused Israel of "crimes against humanity" and being an "occupying power." Although China's Ambassador to Israel, Cai Run, and his staff were forced to hide in a bomb shelter to avoid rocket fire, he stood silent while his counterpart in Ramallah, Guo Wei, gave at least three interviews expressing empathy for the Palestinians. (*Asia Times*, June 18, 2021)

CHINA'S APPS TO FACE SUBPOENAS AND/OR BANS

President Biden has issued an executive order forcing China's apps to protect private information to remain in the U.S. The order will apply to commercial and consumer apps like WeChat and TikTok. The goal is to keep China from accessing personal and business information that could be used to conduct espionage, track U.S. officials and build personal dossiers. The order does not name companies; instead, Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo will identify criteria to decide which apps to target, the Commerce Department will issue subpoenas to collect information about them, and the agency will then either ban the app or negotiate conditions for its safe use. If Raimondo decides that an app poses an unacceptable risk, she "has the discretion to notify the parties" or publish her assessment in the official Federal Register. Companies will then have 30 days to propose measures to better secure Americans' data. (Reuters, June 17, 2021)

FCC ADVANCES PROPOSED BAN ON CHINESE TELECOM EQUIPMENT

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has voted unanimously to ban the use of Chinese companies in U.S. telecom networks. The proposed rules that won initial approval "exclude untrustworthy equipment from our communications networks." "We have left open opportunities for (Huawei and other Chinese equipment) use in the U.S. through our equipment authorization process. So here we propose to close that door," said acting FCC Chair Jessica Rosenworcel. The new measures would allow the FCC to revoke prior equipment authorizations issued to Chinese companies; more than 3000 applications from Huawei alone have been approved since 2018. A bipartisan group of U.S. lawmakers praised the FCC's efforts to "keep compromised Chinese equipment out of U.S. telecommunications networks." (Reuters, June 17, 2021)

[EDITOR'S NOTE: In March, the FCC designated five Chinese companies – Huawei, ZTE, Hytera Communications Corp., Hangzhou Hikvision Digital Tech Co., and Zhejiang Dahua Technology Co. – as a threat to national security under a 2019 law aimed at protecting U.S. networks.]

NATO DECLARES CHINA A SECURITY RISK

At its most recent summit in Brussels, the Atlantic Alliance issued a joint communique warning that China poses "systemic challenges" and expressing the agreement of member states to confront Beijing's military ambitions. The document expressed concern about Beijing's "coercive policies" and said that its "stated ambitions and assertive behavior present systemic challenges to the rules-based international order and to areas relevant to alliance security." NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said China has the world's largest navy, is accumulating nuclear warheads, and is investing in "disruptive technologies" such as facial recognition. "This is changing the nature of warfare in a way that we have hardly seen before, perhaps never seen before, and this affects our security. China's growing influence and international policies present challenges to alliance security. Leaders agreed that we need to address such challenges together as an alliance and that we need to engage with China to defend our security interests." (*Irish Times*, June 14, 2021)