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BIDEN VOWS TO DEFEND TAIWAN IF CHINA ATTACKS

When asked at a CNN town hall event if he would "vow to protect Taiwan," and whether he would keep up with China's military development, President Joe Biden responded: "Yes and yes." CNN anchor Anderson Cooper then asked again whether the U.S. would come to Taiwan's defense if China attacked, and Biden replied: "Yes, we have a commitment to do that." Later, a White House spokesperson said that Biden was "not announcing any change in our policy and there is no change in our policy." This is not the first time the president has made such an assertion, however. In an August interview with ABC News, Biden took the same stance on Taiwan. (BBC, October 22, 2021)

U.S. WARNS OF BEIJING'S EFFORTS TO COLLECT GENETIC DATA

Chinese companies pose a threat to U.S. biotech and pharmaceutical companies, warned Edward You, who works on emerging and disruptive technologies at the U.S. National Counterintelligence and Security Center. You said the Chinese company BGI worked with the PLA to create a neonatal genetic test that has enabled it to collect information from millions of people around the world. By providing cheap genomic sequencing, the company has inked contracts with numerous U.S. health institutions, thereby providing it with access to the genomic data of Americans which can then be "transferred to the Chinese government." In 2015, another firm, WuXi, bought a stake in the consumer genetics company 23andMe. "They are developing the world's largest bio database. Once they have access to your genetic data, it's not something you can change like a pin code," You said. (*New York Times*, October 22, 2021)

CHINA-BASED HACKERS ATTACK HILLEL YAFFE MEDICAL CENTER

Israel two weeks ago. The attack is being investigated by the Israel Police's Lahav 433 cybercrime unit, which is coordinating with several foreign governments and law-enforcement agencies. It is believed that there was a financial motive behind the attack, but the cyber intrusion also tested the hospital's capabilities in preparation for attacks against bigger targets. Hackers consider critical infrastructure and security facilities to be hard targets, while hospitals and academic institutions are weak points of penetration. "Israel's defense establishment views the attack, which follows a recent sharp spike in cyber-attacks on strategic targets in the country by foreign parties, as a significant event," the *Cleveland Jewish News* reported. (*Cleveland Jewish News*, October 28, 2021)

CHINA TO BUILD OUTPOST FOR TAJIK FORCES NEAR XINJIANG, AFGHAN BORDER

China will finance the construction of a special forces' outpost for Tajikistan's police in the Pamir mountains in Tajikistan's Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Province, which borders both Xinjiang and Afghanistan. No PLA troops will be stationed at the facility, said a Tajik parliament spokesperson. The construction comes amid tensions between Dushanbe and Kabul in the aftermath of the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan. Tajik President Emomali Rakhmon has refused to recognize the militant movement, and is calling for more representation of Afghan Tajiks, the country's second-biggest minority. The Taliban, for its part, has warned Dushanbe not to meddle in Afghan affairs, and struck an alliance with Tajik militants based in northern Afghanistan who are seeking to overthrow Rakhmon. (Reuters, October 28, 2021)

CHINA RATIONS ELECTRICITY AND DIESEL AMID SHORTAGES

Coal and fuel shortages have left drivers, homes, and factories without power in many parts of the country and are contributing to a global supply chain crisis. As supplies fall and prices rise, gas stations have begun rationing diesel, leaving truckers waiting in line for days to refuel. In some parts of the country, drivers can only buy up to 25 liters of fuel at a time. In Shijiazhuang, Hebei, trucks are only being allowed to fill up 100 liters each – or about 10% of their capacity – while in Fuyang, Hebei, stations are limiting purchases and imposing surcharges of up to 300 yuan (\$47). "All fossil fuels have seen a price renaissance lately as the underinvestment in these fuel sources has created a shortfall of supply at a time when demand is surging. Oil, gas, coal prices have all moved in tandem and are through the roof," notes economist Aidan Yao. (BBC, October 28, 2021)