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CANADA TO BAN CHINA'S HUAWEI AND ZTE FROM ITS 5G NETWORKS

Canada will ban China's two largest telecommunications equipment makers, Huawei and ZTE, from working on its 5G phone networks. The country's industry minister, Francois-Philippe Champagne, said the decision, which came after "a full review by our security agencies and consultation with our closest allies, would "protect the safety and security of Canadians...and safeguard our telecommunication infrastructure." Canada is the last member of the "Five Eyes" intelligence-sharing network, which also includes the UK, U.S., Australia and New Zealand, to restrict the Chinese firms. (BBC, May 20, 2022)

TAIWAN REMEMBERS THE TIANANMEN SQUARE, HONG KONG SILENCED

Hundreds gathered in Liberty Square in Taipei, Taiwan to mark the 1989 Tiananmen crackdown on pro-democracy protesters, which killed thousands of protesters and Beijing residents. Meanwhile at Victoria Park in Hong Kong, which until 2019 was the site of the world's largest candlelight vigil, thousands of police were deployed to cordon off the park and prevent it from being used for "illegal activities." Officers searched pedestrians holding flowers, lit-up phones, and anyone wearing black. "The collective memory of June 4 is being systematically erased in Hong Kong. But we believe that such brute force cannot erase the people's memory," said Taiwan's President, Tsai Ing-wen. (Nikkei, June 5, 2022)

CHINA'S ATTEMPTS TO INFLUENCE JERUSALEM POST BACKFIRE

China's ambassador to Israel has demanded that the Jerusalem Post remove an interview with Taiwan's Foreign Minister, Joseph Wu, and threatened consequences for China-Israel relations. In the interview, Wu warned Israel was relying too much on China, which is preparing to invade his country. The Chinese embassy subsequently sent a letter expressing its "firm opposition and strong condemnation" of the interview with a "Taiwan independence separatist." In response, Knesset member Moshe Arbel wrote to Foreign Minister Yair Lapid calling Beijing's attempt to influence paper "chutzpah in the first degree" and "a blatant attempt to damage freedom of speech and press freedom in Israel." "Foreign governments must not be allowed to attempt to dictate to Israeli newspapers and navigate media discourse according to their foreign interest," he wrote. (*Jerusalem Post*, June 2, 2022)

CHINA-LINKED TWITTER HARASSMENT TARGETS FEMALE JOURNALISTS

A network of Beijing-linked Twitter accounts is targeting female journalists of Chinese heritage who work for Western news outlets in a campaign of online harassment that is part of a larger effort to silence overseas criticism through coercion and intimidation. The Twitter accounts of the New Yorker's Fan Jiayang, The Economist's Alice Su, and the New York Times' Muiy Xiao, are among those which have been flooded with thousands of tweets attacking them as traitors "smearing" China. Twitter has suspended more than 400 linked accounts for violation of platform policies. Many were dedicated exclusively to tweeting attacks on one or more of the women. Although many of the attacks were generic and had the characteristics of a bot network – generic names, the use of photos of real women taken from other websites, or AI-generated images – others, like those targeting Fan, were personally tailored. (Axios, June 3, 2022)

CHINA'S SURGEONS HAVE BECOME EXECUTIONERS

Based on a review of nearly 3000 Chinese-language clinical reports published in the American Journal of Transplantation, the Wall Street Journal has found that surgeons in China are regularly removing vital organs for transplant from donors before they are dead. Dozens of reports – spanning three decades in 56 Chinese hospitals, and involving more than 300 medical workers – described brain death being declared before the donor was intubated. For a declaration of brain death to be legitimate, the organ donor must have lost the ability to breathe spontaneously and have already been intubated. "Highly skilled surgeons have been killing prisoners with their scalpels on the operating table for decades," the paper found. (*Wall Street Journal*, May 31, 2022)

[EDITOR'S NOTE: Despite China's large, lucrative, and longstanding trade in harvested prisoners' organs, the World Health Organization took advice from Chinese transplant surgeons when setting up its task force against organ trafficking – and then appointed them to the membership committee.]