



CHINA REFORM MONITOR

The American Foreign Policy Council's Review of
P.R.C. Government Actions and U.S. Policy

China Reform Monitor No. 1541

March 6, 2023 **Joshua Eisenman**

Related Categories: Arms Control and Proliferation; Intelligence and Counterintelligence; Public Diplomacy and Information Operations; Science and Technology; Australia; China; Latin America; Taiwan

CPC SEEKS TO "ENHANCE" TIES WITH TAIWAN'S KMT

China is wooing the Kuomintang (KMT), Taiwan's main opposition party, ahead of the island's January 2024 presidential election. Beijing wants closer ties with the KMT, said Song Tao, head of Beijing's Taiwan Affairs Office, in a meeting with visiting KMT vice-chairman Andrew Hsia. Song said the CPC is "willing to enhance exchanges and build up mutual trust with the KMT, and work with the KMT to promote relations between the two parties and two sides of the Taiwan Strait." Taipei's Mainland Affairs Council said Beijing's handling of Hsia's visit was "harming our sovereign dignity" and said Beijing should "abandon coercive thinking towards Taiwan." Hsia is slated to meet Politburo Standing Committee member Wang Huning during his nine-day trip to China. (Straits Times, February 10, 2023)

HONG KONG STARTS ITS LARGEST NATIONAL SECURITY TRIAL EVER

Hong Kong has begun the trial of 47 prominent pro-democracy figures on "subversion" charges for participating in an unofficial primary vote in 2020 to support opposition candidates in a legislative election. The defendants, which include former legislators, labor activists, journalists, and scholars, were charged two years ago for what officials call a "vicious plot" to destabilize the city amid the mass street protests in 2019. Most of them have been held without bail since their arrests in predawn raids in February 2021. Under the 2020 National Security Law, subversion, secession, terrorism and colluding with foreign forces carry 5 years to life term. (Nikkei, February 6, 2023)

AUSTRALIAN DEFENSE DEPARTMENT REMOVES CHINESE-MADE CAMERAS

Australian Defense Minister Richard Marles said his department will remove surveillance cameras made by Chinese companies from its buildings following similar moves by the U.S. and Britain. There are at least 913 cameras, intercoms, electronic entry systems and video recorders made by Hikvision and Dahua in Australian government agencies. Under the PRC's National Intelligence Law, both companies are required to cooperate with China's intelligence agencies. "Where those particular cameras are found, they're going to be removed. There is an issue here and we're going to deal with it," Marles said. In November, the U.S. and UK both banned several prominent Chinese brands, including Hikvision and Dahua, citing a need to protect their communications networks. (AP News, February 9, 2023)

CHINA CONFIRMS ANOTHER OF ITS BALLOONS IS OVER LATIN AMERICA

Beijing has acknowledged another of its balloons is floating over Latin America but claims it is for civilian purposes. "Affected by the weather and with limited self-steering capability, the airship deviated far from its planned course," said a Chinese spokesperson. The morning the U.S. shot down a Chinese spy balloon off the South Carolina coast, Colombia's National Air Defense System identified the object, which entered the northern part of the country's airspace. The Colombian Air Force determined that it had "characteristics similar to those of a balloon," was flying at over 55,000 feet, and moving at 25 knots. (New York Times, February 6, 2023)

CHINA HAS "PENETRATED" UN AGENCIES BY FINANCING AND STACKING THEM

China has "penetrated" the United Nations, undercutting its oversight functions by stacking bodies like the UN Human Rights Council with its people, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman told a hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. "The Chinese operate in the UN system very effectively. They have put people in junior positions, which you simply can sign up for financially and put people into slots, and then those people move up the chain in the UN system." She said the U.S. must maintain representation at the UN, and that the State Department had "a lot of work to do" to counteract Beijing's growing influence. Committee Chairman Robert Menendez (D-NJ) said the U.S. should "take a lesson from" China, noting that Beijing had "methodically implemented their people in a way that ultimately leads them to have influence on a wide variety [of bodies] across the UN." (Radio Free Asia, February 9, 2023)